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THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

By H. DE BALZAC

SCENES FROM MILITARY LIFE

THE CHOUANS

A PASSION IN THE DESERT



REVUE

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Procédé Goussier

*“Mademoiselle de Verneuil and the Marquis
de Montauran.”*

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THE WORKS
OF
HONORÉ DE BALZAC

TRANSLATED BY
KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY

VOLUME XVI

THE CHOUANS
A PASSION IN THE DESERT
THE BROTHERHOOD OF CONSOLATION
Z. MARCAS

Illustrated
By G. BOURGAIN AND M. GUYON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
BOSTON

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JOHN WILSON AN

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*Designed by G. Bourgain, and reproduced in photogravure by
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THE CHOUANS.

TO MONSIEUR THÉODORE DABLIN, MERCHANT.

To my first friend, my first work.

DE BALZAC

I.

AN AMBUSCADE.

EARLY in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendémiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasant and a large number of citizens, who had left Fougères in the morning on their way to Mayenne, were going up the little mountain of La Pèlerine, half-way between Fougères and Ernée, a small town where travellers along that road are in the habit of resting. This company, divided into groups that were more or less numerous, presented a collection of such fantastic costume and a mixture of individuals belonging to so many and diverse localities and professions that it will be well to describe their characteristic differences, in order to give to this history the vivid local coloring to which so much value is attached in these days, — though some critics do assert that it injures the representation of sentiments.

Many of the peasants, in fact the greater number were barefooted, and wore no other garments than

large goatskin, which covered them from the neck to the knees, and trousers of white and very coarse linen, the ill-woven texture of which betrayed the slovenly industrial habits of the region. The straight locks of their long hair mingling with those of the goatskin hid their faces, which were bent on the ground, so completely that the garment might have been thought their own skin, and they themselves mistaken at first sight for a species of the animal which served them as clothing. But through this tangle of hair their eyes were presently seen to shine like dew-drops in a thicket, and their glances, full of human intelligence, caused fear rather than pleasure to those who met them. Their heads were covered with a dirty head-gear of red flannel, not unlike the Phrygian cap which the Republic had lately adopted as an emblem of liberty. Each man carried over his shoulder a heavy stick of knotted oak, at the end of which hung a linen bag with little in it. Some wore, over the red cap, a coarse felt hat, with a broad brim adorned by a sort of woollen chenille of many colors which was fastened round it. Others were clothed entirely in the coarse linen of which the trousers and wallets of all were made, and showed nothing that was distinctive of the new order of civilization. Their long hair fell upon the collar of a round jacket with square pockets, which reached to the hips only, a garment peculiar to the peasantry of western France. Beneath this jacket, which was worn open, a waistcoat of the same linen with large buttons was visible. Some of the company marched in wooden shoes; others, by way of economy, carried them in their hand. This costume, soiled by long usage, blackened with sweat and dust, and less original than

that of the other men, had the historic merit of serving as a transition between the goatskins and the brilliant, almost sumptuous, dress of a few individuals dispersed here and there among the groups, where they shone like flowers. In fact, the blue linen trousers of these last; and their red or yellow waistcoats, adorned with two parallel rows of brass buttons and not unlike breast-plates, stood out as vividly among the white linen and shaggy skins of their companions as the corn-flowers and poppies in a wheat-field. Some of them wore wooden shoes, which the peasants of Brittany make for themselves; but the greater number had heavy hob-nailed boots, and coats of coarse cloth cut in the fashion of the old régime, the shape of which the peasants have religiously retained even to the present day. The collar of their shirts were held together by buttons in the shape of hearts or anchors. The wallets of these men seemed to be better filled than those of their companions, and several of them added to their marching outfit a flask, probably full of brandy, slung round their necks by a bit of twine. A few burgesses were to be seen in the midst of these semi-savages, as if to show the extremes of civilization in this region. Wearing round hats, or flapping brims or caps, high-topped boots, or shoes and gaiters, they exhibited as much and as remarkable differences in their costume as the peasants themselves. About a dozen of them wore the republican jacket known by the name of "*la camagnole*." Others, well-to-do mechanics, no doubt were clothed from head to foot in cloth of one color. Those who had most pretension in their dress wore swallow-tail coats or surtouts of blue or green cloth more or less defaced. These last, evidently character

marched in boots of various kinds, swinging heavy canes with the air and manner of those who take heart under misfortune. A few heads carefully powdered, and some queues tolerably well braided showed the sort of care which a beginning of education or prosperity inspires. A casual spectator observing these men, all surprised to find themselves in one another's company, would have thought them the inhabitants of a village driven out by a conflagration. But the period and the region in which they were gave an altogether different interest to this body of men. Any one initiated into the secrets of the civil discords which were then agitating the whole of France could easily have distinguished the few individuals on whose fidelity the Republic might count among these groups, almost entirely made up of men who four years earlier were at war with her.

One other and rather noticeable sign left no doubt upon the opinions which divided the detachment. The Republicans alone marched with an air of gayety. As to the other individuals of the troop, if their clothes showed marked differences, their faces at least and their attitudes wore a uniform expression of ill-fortune. Citizens and peasantry, their faces all bore the imprint of deepest melancholy; their silence had something sullen in it; they all seemed crushed under the yoke of a single thought, terrible no doubt but carefully concealed, for their faces were impenetrable, the slowness of their gait alone betraying their inward communings. From time to time a few of them, noticeable for the rosaries hanging from their necks (dangerous as it was to carry that sign of a religion which was suppressed, rather than abolished) shook their long

hair and raised their heads defiantly. They covertly examined the woods, and paths, and masses of rock which flanked the road, after the manner of a dog with his nose to the wind trying to scent his game; then, hearing nothing but the monotonous tramp of the silent company, they lowered their heads once more with the old expression of despair, like criminals on their way to the galleys to live or die.

The march of this column upon Mayenne, the heterogeneous elements of which it was composed, and the divers sentiments which evidently pervaded it, will explain the presence of another troop which formed the head of the detachment. About a hundred and fifty soldiers, with arms and baggage, marched in the advance, commanded by the *chief of a half-brigade*. We may mention here, for the benefit of those who did not witness the drama of the Revolution, that this title was made to supersede that of colonel, proscribed by patriots as too aristocratic. These soldiers belonged to a demi-brigade of infantry quartered at Mayenne. During these troublous times the inhabitants of the west of France called all the soldiers of the Republic "Blues." This nickname came originally from their blue and red uniforms, the memory of which is still so fresh as to render a description superfluous. A detachment of the Blues was therefore on this occasion escorting a body of recruits, or rather conscripts, all displeased at being taken to Mayenne where military discipline was about to force upon them the uniformity of thought, clothing, and gait which they now lacked entirely.

This column was a contingent slowly and with difficulty raised in the district of Fougères, from which it

was due under the levy ordered by the executive Directory of the Republic on the preceding 10th Messidor. The government had asked for a hundred million of francs and a hundred thousand men as immediate reinforcements for the armies then fighting the Austrians in Italy, the Prussians in Germany, and menaced in Switzerland by the Russians, in whom Suwarow had inspired hopes of the conquest of France. The departments of the West, known under the name of La Vendée, Brittany, and a portion of Lower Normandy, which had been tranquil for the last three years (thanks to the action of General Hoche), after a struggle lasting nearly four, seemed to have seized this new occasion of danger to the nation to break out again. In presence of such aggressions the Republic recovered its pristine energy. It provided in the first place for the defence of the threatened departments by giving the responsibility to the loyal and patriotic portion of the inhabitants. In fact, the government in Paris, having neither troops nor money to send to the interior, evaded the difficulty by a parliamentary gasconade. Not being able to send material aid to the faithful citizens of the insurgent departments, it gave them its "confidence." Possibly the government hoped that this measure, by arming the inhabitants against each other, would stifle the insurrection at its birth. This ordinance, the cause of future fatal reprisals, was thus worded: "Independent companies of troops shall be organized in the Western departments." This impolitic step drove the West as a body into so hostile an attitude that the Directory despaired of immediately subduing it. Consequently, it asked the Assemblies to pass certain special measures relating to the inde-

pendent companies authorized by the ordinance. In response to this request a new law had been promulgated a few days before this history begins, organizing into regular legions the various weak and scattered companies. These legions were to bear the names of the departments, — Sarthe, Orne, Mayenne, Ile-et-Vilaine, Morbihan, Loire-Inférieure, and Maine-et-Loire. “These legions,” said the law, “will be specially employed to fight the Chouans, and cannot, under any pretence, be sent to the frontier.”

The foregoing irksome details will explain both the weakness of the Directory and the movement of this troop of men under escort of the Blues. It may not be superfluous to add that these finely patriotic Directorial decrees had no realization beyond their insertion among the statutes. No longer restrained, as formerly, by great moral ideas, by patriotism, nor by terror, which enforced their execution, these later decrees of the Republic created millions and drafted soldiers without the slightest benefit accruing to its exchequer or its armies. The mainspring of the Revolution was worn-out by clumsy handling, and the application of the laws took the impress of circumstances instead of controlling them.

The departments of Mayenne and Ile-et-Vilaine were at this time under the command of an old officer who, judging on the spot of the measures that were most opportune to take, was anxious to wring from Brittany every one of her contingents, more especially that of Fougères, which was known to be a hot-bed of “Chouannerie.” He hoped by this means to weaken its strength in these formidable districts. This devoted soldier made use of the illusory provisions of the

new law to declare that he would equip and arm at once all recruits, and he announced that he held at their disposal the one month's advanced pay promised by the government to these exceptional levies. Though Brittany had hitherto repeatedly refused all kinds of military service under the Republic, the levies were made under the new law on the faith of its promises, and with such promptness that even the commander was startled. But he was one of those wary old watch-dogs who are hard to catch napping. He no sooner saw the contingents arriving one after the other than he suspected some secret motive for such prompt action. Possibly he was right in ascribing it to the fact of getting arms. At any rate, no sooner were the Fougères recruits obtained than, without delaying for laggards, he took immediate steps to fall back towards Alençon, so as to be near a loyal neighborhood, — though the growing disaffection along the route made the success of this measure problematical. This old officer, who, under instruction of his superiors, kept secret the disasters of our armies in Italy and Germany and the disturbing news from La Vendée, was attempting on the morning when this history begins, to make a forced march on Mayenne, where he was resolved to execute the law according to his own good pleasure, and fill the half-empty companies of his own brigade with his Breton conscripts. The word "conscript" which later became so celebrated, had just now for the first time taken the place in the government decrees of the word *requisitionnaire* hitherto applied to all Republican recruits.

Before leaving Fougères the chief secretly issued to his own men ample supplies of ammunition and suffi-

cient rations of bread for the whole detachment, so as to conceal from the conscripts the length of the march before them. He intended not to stop at Ernée (the last stage before Mayenne), where the men of the contingent might find a way of communicating with the Chouans who were no doubt hanging on his flanks. The dead silence which reigned among the recruits, surprised at the manœuvring of the old republican, and their lagging march up the mountain excited to the very utmost the distrust and watchfulness of the chief — whose name was Hulot. All the striking points in the foregoing description had been to him matters of the keenest interest; he marched in silence, surrounded by five young officers, each of whom respected the evident preoccupation of their leader. But just as Hulot reached the summit of La Pèlerine he turned his head, as if by instinct, to inspect the anxious faces of the recruits, and suddenly broke silence. The slow advance of the Bretons had put a distance of three or four hundred feet between themselves and their escort. Hulot's face contorted after a fashion peculiar to himself.

“What the devil are those dandies up to?” he exclaimed in a sonorous voice. “Creeping instead of marching, I call it.”

At his first words the officers who accompanied him turned spasmodically, as if startled out of sleep by a sudden noise. The sergeants and corporals followed their example, and the whole company paused in its march without receiving the wished for “Halt!” Though the officers cast a first look at the detachment, which was creeping like an elongated tortoise up the mountain of La Pèlerine, these young men, all dragged, like many others, from important studies to defend their country,

and in whom war had not yet smothered the sentiment of art, were so much struck by the scene which lay spread before their eyes that they made no answer to their chief's remark, the real significance of which was unknown to them. Though they had come from Fougères, where the scene which now presented itself to their eyes is also visible (but with certain differences caused by the change of perspective), they could not resist pausing to admire it again, like those dilettanti who enjoy all music the more when familiar with its construction.

From the summit of La Pèlerine the traveller's eye can range over the great valley of Couësson, at one of the farthest points of which, along the horizon, lay the town of Fougères. From here the officers could see, to its full extent, the basin of this intervalle, as remarkable for the fertility of its soil as for the variety of its aspects. Mountains of gneiss and slate rose on all sides, like an amphitheatre, hiding their ruddy flanks behind forests of oak, and forming on their declivities other and lesser valleys full of dewy freshness. These rocky heights made a vast inclosure, circular in form, in the centre of which a meadow lay softly stretched, like the lawn of an English garden. A number of evergreen hedges, defining irregular pieces of property which were planted with trees, gave to this carpet of verdure a character of its own, and one that is somewhat unusual among the landscapes of France; it held the teeming secrets of many beauties in its various contrasts, the effects of which were fine enough to arrest the eye of the most indifferent spectator.

At this particular moment the scene was brightened by the fleeting glow with which Nature delights at times in heightening the beauty of her imperishable

creations. While the detachment was crossing the valley, the rising sun had slowly scattered the fleecy mists which float above the meadows of a September morning. As the soldiers turned to look back, an invisible hand seemed to lift from the landscape the last of these veils — a delicate vapor, like a diaphanous gauze through which the glow of precious jewels excites our curiosity. Not a cloud could be seen on the wide horizon to mark by its silvery whiteness that the vast blue arch was the firmament; it seemed, on the contrary, a dais of silk, held up by the summits of the mountains and placed in the atmosphere, to protect that beautiful assemblage of fields and meadows and groves and brooks.

The group of young officers paused to examine a scene so filled with natural beauties. The eyes of some roved among the copses, which the sterner tints of autumn were already enriching with their russet tones, contrasting the more with the emerald-green of the meadows in which they grew; others took note of a different contrast, made by the ruddy fields, where the buckwheat had been cut and tied in sheaves (like stands of arms around a bivouac), adjoining other fields of rich ploughed land, from which the rye was already harvested. Here and there were dark slate roofs above which puffs of white smoke were rising. The glittering silver threads of the winding brooks caught the eye, here and there, by one of those optic lures which render the soul — one knows not how or why — perplexed and dreamy. The fragrant freshness of the autumn breeze, the stronger odors of the forest, rose like a waft of incense to the admirers of this beautiful region, who noticed with delight its rare wild-flowers, its vigorous vegetation, and its verdure, worthy of England, the

very word being common to the two languages. A few cattle gave life to the scene, already so dramatic. The birds sang, filling the valley with a sweet, vague melody that quivered in the air. If a quiet imagination will picture to itself these rich fluctuations of light and shade, the vaporous outline of the mountains, the mysterious perspectives which were seen where the trees gave an opening, or the streamlets ran, or some coquettish little glade fled away in the distance; if memory will color, as it were, this sketch, as fleeting as the moment when it was taken, the persons for whom such pictures are not without charm will have an imperfect image of the magic scene which delighted the still impressionable souls of the young officers.

Thinking that the poor recruits must be leaving, with regret, their own country and their beloved customs, to die, perhaps, in foreign lands, they involuntarily excused a tardiness their feelings comprehended. Then, with the generosity natural to soldiers, they disguised their indulgence under an apparent desire to examine into the military position of the land. But Hulot, whom we shall henceforth call the commandant, to avoid giving him the inharmonious title of "chief of a half-brigade" was one of those soldiers who, in critical moments, cannot be caught by the charms of a landscape, were they even those of a terrestrial paradise. He shook his head with an impatient gesture and contracted the thick, black eyebrows which gave so stern an expression to his face.

"Why the devil don't they come up?" he said, for the second time, in a hoarse voice, roughened by the toils of war.

"You ask why?" replied a voice.

Hearing these words, which seemed to issue from a horn, such as the peasants of the western valleys use to call their flocks, the commandant turned sharply round, as if pricked by a sword, and beheld, close behind him, a personage even more fantastic in appearance than any of those who were now being escorted to Mayenne to serve the Republic. This unknown man, short and thick-set in figure and broad-shouldered, had a head like a bull, to which, in fact, he bore more than one resemblance. His nose seemed shorter than it was, on account of the thick nostrils. His full lips, drawn from the teeth which were white as snow, his large and round black eyes with their shaggy brows, his hanging ears and tawny hair, — seemed to belong far less to our fine Caucasian race than to a breed of herbivorous animals. The total absence of all the usual characteristics of the social man made that bare head still more remarkable. The face, bronzed by the sun (its angular outlines presenting a sort of vague likeness to the granite which forms the soil of the region), was the only visible portion of the body of this singular being. From the neck down he was wrapped in a “sarrau” or smock, a sort of russet linen blouse, coarser in texture than that of the trousers of the less fortunate conscripts. This “sarrau,” in which an antiquary would have recognized the “saye,” or the “sayon” of the Gauls, ended at his middle, where it was fastened to two leggings of goatskin by slivers, or thongs of wood, roughly cut, — some of them still covered with their peel or bark. These hides of the nanny-goat (to give them the name by which they were known to the peasantry) covered his legs and thighs, and masked all appearance of human shape. Enormous sabots hid his

feet. His long and shining hair fell straight, like the goat's hair, on either side of his face, being parted in the centre like the hair of certain statues of the Middle-Ages which are still to be seen in our cathedrals. In place of the knotty stick which the conscripts carried over their shoulders, this man held against his breast, as though it were a musket, a heavy whip, the lash of which was closely braided and seemed to be twice as long as that of an ordinary whip. The sudden apparition of this strange being seemed easily explained. At first sight some of the officers took him for a recruit or conscript (the words were used indiscriminately) who had outstripped the column. But the commandant himself was singularly surprised by the man's presence; he showed no alarm, but his face grew thoughtful. After looking the intruder well over, he repeated, mechanically, as if preoccupied with anxious thought: "Yes, why don't they come on? do you know, you?"

"Because," said the gloomy apparition, with an accent which proved his difficulty in speaking French, "there Maine begins" (pointing with his huge, rough hand towards Ernée), "and Bretagne ends."

Then he struck the ground sharply with the handle of his heavy whip close to the commandant's feet. The impression produced on the spectators by the laconic harangue of the stranger was like that of a tom-tom in the midst of tender music. But the word "harangue" is insufficient to reproduce the hatred, the desires of vengeance expressed by the haughty gesture of the hand, the brevity of the speech, and the look of sullen and cool-blooded energy on the countenance of the speaker. The coarseness and roughness of the man, — chopped out, as it seemed by an axe, with his rough bark still

left on him,—and the stupid ignorance of his features, made him seem, for the moment, like some half-savage demigod. He stood stock-still in a prophetic attitude, as though he were the Genius of Brittany rising from a slumber of three years, to renew a war in which victory could only be followed by twofold mourning.

“A pretty fellow this!” thought Hulot; “he looks to me like the emissary of men who mean to argue with their muskets.”

Having growled these words between his teeth, the commandant cast his eyes in turn from the man to the valley, from the valley to the detachment, from the detachment to the steep acclivities on the right of the road, the ridges of which were covered with the broom and gorse of Brittany; then he suddenly turned them full on the stranger, whom he subjected to a mute interrogation, which he ended at last by roughly demanding, “Where do you come from?”

His eager, piercing eye strove to detect the secrets of that impenetrable face, which never changed from the vacant, torpid expression in which a peasant when doing nothing wraps himself.

“From the country of the Gars,” replied the man, without showing any uneasiness.

“Your name?”

“*Marche-à-Terre.*”

“Why do you call yourself by your Chouan name in defiance of the law?”

Marche-à-Terre, to use the name he gave to himself, looked at the commandant with so genuine an air of stupidity that the soldier believed the man had not understood him.

“Do you belong to the recruits from Fougères?”

To this inquiry Marche-à-Terre replied by the bucolic "I don't know," the hopeless imbecility of which puts an end to all inquiry. He seated himself by the roadside, drew from his smock a few pieces of thin, black buckwheat-bread, — a national delicacy, the dismal delights of which none but a Breton can understand, — and began to eat with stolid indifference. There seemed such a total absence of all human intelligence about the man that the officers compared him in turn to the cattle browsing in the valley pastures, to the savages of America, or the aboriginal inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope. Deceived by his behavior, the commandant himself was about to turn a deaf ear to his own misgivings, when, casting a last prudent glance on the man whom he had taken for the herald of an approaching carnage, he suddenly noticed that the hair, the smock, and the goatskin leggings of the stranger were full of thorns, scraps of leaves, and bits of trees and bushes, as though this Chouan had lately made his way for a long distance through thickets and underbrush. Hulot looked significantly at his adjutant Gérard who stood beside him, pressed his hand firmly, and said in a low voice: "We came for wool, but we shall go back sheared."

The officers looked at each other silently in astonishment.

It is necessary here to make a digression, or the fears of the commandment will not be intelligible to those stay-at-home persons who are in the habit of doubting everything because they have seen nothing, and who might therefore deny the existence of Marche-à-Terre and the peasantry of the West, whose conduct, in the times we are speaking of, was often sublime.

The word "gars" pronounced "gâ" is a relic of the Celtic language. It has passed from low Breton into French, and the word in our present speech has more ancient associations than any other. The "gais" was the principal weapon of the Gauls; "gaisde" meant armed; "gais" courage; "gas," force. The word has an analogy with the Latin word "vir" man, the root of "virtus" strength, courage. The present dissertation is excusable as of national interest; besides, it may help to restore the use of such words as: "gars, garçon, garçonnelle, garce, garcette," now discarded from our speech as unseemly; whereas their origin is so warlike that we shall use them from time to time in the course of this history. "She is a famous 'garce'!" was a compliment little understood by Madame de Staël when it was paid to her in a little village of La Vendée, where she spent a few days of her exile.

Brittany is the region in all France where the manners and customs of the Gauls have left their strongest imprint. That portion of the province where, even to our own times, the savage life and superstitious ideas of our rude ancestors still continue — if we may use the word — rampant, is called "the country of the Gars." When a canton (or district) is inhabited by a number of half-savages like the one who has just appeared upon the scene, the inhabitants call them "the Gars of such or such a parish." This classic name is a reward for the fidelity with which they struggle to preserve the traditions of the language and manners of their Gaelic ancestors; their lives show to this day many remarkable and deeply embedded vestiges of the beliefs and superstitious practices of those ancient times. Feudal customs are still maintained. Antiquaries find Druidic

monuments still standing. The genius of modern civilization shrinks from forcing its way through those impenetrable primordial forests. An unheard-of ferociousness, a brutal obstinacy, but also a regard for the sanctity of an oath; a complete ignoring of our laws, our customs, our dress, our modern coins, our language, but withal a patriarchal simplicity and virtues that are heroic, — unite in keeping the inhabitants of this region more impoverished as to all intellectual knowledge than the Redskins, but also as proud, as crafty, and as enduring as they. The position which Brittany occupies in the centre of Europe makes it more interesting to observe than Canada. Surrounded by light whose beneficent warmth never reaches it, this region is like a frozen coal left black in the middle of a glowing fire. The efforts made by several noble minds to win this glorious part of France, so rich in neglected treasures, to social life and to prosperity have all, even when sustained by government, come to nought against the inflexibility of a population given over to the habits of immemorial routine. This unfortunate condition is partly accounted for by the nature of the land, broken by ravines, mountain torrents, lakes, and marshes, and bristling with hedges or earth-works which make a sort of citadel of every field; without roads, without canals, and at the mercy of prejudices which scorn our modern agriculture. These will further be shown with all their dangers in our present history.

The picturesque lay of the land and the superstitions of the inhabitants prevent the formation of communities and the benefits arising from the exchange and comparison of ideas. There are no villages. The rickety buildings which the people call homes are

sparsely scattered through the wilderness. Each family lives as in a desert. The only meetings among them are on Sundays and feast-days in the parish church. These silent assemblies, under the eye of the rector (the only ruler of these rough minds) last some hours. After listening to the awful words of the priest they return to their noisome hovels for another week; they leave them only to work, they return to them only to sleep. No one ever visits them, unless it is the rector. Consequently, it was the voice of the priesthood which roused Brittany against the Republic, and sent thousands of men, five years before this history begins, to the support of the first Chouannerie. The brothers Cottereau, whose name was given to that first uprising, were bold smugglers, plying their perilous trade between Laval and Fougères. The insurrections of Brittany had nothing fine or noble about them; and it may be truly said that if La Vendée turned its brigandage into a great war, Brittany turned war into a brigandage. The proscription of princes, the destruction of religion, far from inspiring great sacrifices, were to the Chouans pretexts for mere pillage; and the events of this intestine warfare had all the savage moroseness of their own natures. When the real defenders of the monarchy came to recruit men among these ignorant and violent people they vainly tried to give, for the honor of the white flag, some grandeur to the enterprises which had hitherto rendered the brigands odious: the Chouans remain in history as a memorable example of the danger of uprousing the uncivilized masses of the nation.

The sketch here made of a Breton valley and of the Breton men in the detachment of recruits, more espe-

cially that of the "gars" who so suddenly appeared on the summit of Mont Pélérine, gives a brief but faithful picture of the province and its inhabitants. A trained imagination can by the help of these details obtain some idea of the theatre of the war and of the men who were its instruments. The flowering hedges of the beautiful valleys concealed the combatants. Each field was a fortress, every tree an ambush; the hollow trunk of each old willow hid a stratagem. The place for a fight was everywhere. Sharpshooters were lurking at every turn for the Blues, whom laughing young girls, unmindful of their perfidy, attracted within range, — for had they not made pilgrimages with their fathers and their brothers, imploring to be taught wiles, and receiving absolution from their wayside Virgins of rotten wood? Religion, or rather the fetichism of these ignorant creatures, absolved such murders of remorse.

Thus, when the struggle had once begun, every part of the country was dangerous, — in fact, all things were full of peril, sound as well as silence, attraction as well as fear, the family hearth or the open country. Treachery was everywhere, but it was treachery from conviction. The people were savages serving God and the King after the fashion of Red Indians. To make this sketch of the struggle exact and true at all points, the historian must add that the moment Hoche had signed his peace the whole country subsided into smiles and friendliness. Families who were rending each other to pieces over night, were supping together without danger the next day.

The very moment that Commandant Hulot became aware of the secret treachery betrayed by the hairy skins of Marche-à-Terre, he was convinced that this peace,

due to the genius of Hoche, the stability of which he had always doubted, was at an end. The civil war, he felt, was about to be renewed, — doubtless more terrible than ever after a cessation of three years. The Revolution, mitigated by the events of the 9th Thermidor, would doubtless return to the old terrors which had made it odious to sound minds. English gold would, as formerly, assist in the national discords. The Republic, abandoned by young Bonaparte who had seemed to be its tutelary genius, was no longer in a condition to resist its enemies from without and from within, — the worst and most cruel of whom were the last to appear. The Civil War, already threatened by various partial risings, would assume a new and far more serious aspect if the Chouans were now to attack so strong an escort. Such were the reflections that filled the mind of the commander (though less succinctly formulated) as soon as he perceived, in the condition of Marche-à-Terre's clothing, the signs of an ambush carefully planned.

The silence which followed the prophetic remark of the commandant to Gérard gave Hulot time to recover his self-possession. The old soldier had been shaken. He could not hinder his brow from clouding as he felt himself surrounded by the horrors of a warfare the atrocities of which would have shamed even cannibals. Captain Merle and the adjutant Gérard could not explain to themselves the evident dread on the face of their leader as he looked at Marche-à-Terre eating his bread by the side of the road. But Hulot's face soon cleared ; he began to rejoice in the opportunity to fight for the Republic, and he joyously vowed to escape being the dupe of the Chouans, and to fathom the wily

and impenetrable being whom they had done him the honor to employ against him.

Before taking any resolution he set himself to study the position in which it was evident the enemy intended to surprise him. Observing that the road where the column had halted was about to pass through a sort of gorge, short to be sure, but flanked with woods from which several paths appeared to issue, he frowned heavily, and said to his two friends, in a low voice of some emotion: —

“We’re in a devil of a wasp’s-nest.”

“What do you fear?” asked Gérard.

“Fear? Yes, that’s it, *fear*,” returned the commandant. “I have always had a fear of being shot like a dog at the edge of a wood, without a chance of crying out ‘Who goes there?’”

“Pooh!” said Merle, laughing, “‘Who goes there’ is all humbug.”

“Are we in any real danger?” asked Gérard, as much surprised by Hulot’s coolness as he was by his evident alarm.

“Hush!” said the commandant, in a low voice. “We are in the jaws of the wolf; it is as dark as a pocket; and we must get some light. Luckily, we’ve got the upper end of the slope!”

So saying, he moved, with his two officers, in a way to surround Marche-à-Terre, who rose quickly, pretending to think himself in the way.

“Stay where you are, vagabond!” said Hulot, keeping his eye on the apparently indifferent face of the Breton, and giving him a push which threw him back on the place where he had been sitting.

“Friends,” continued Hulot, in a low voice, speak-

ing to the two officers. "It is time I should tell you that it is all up with the army in Paris. The Directory, in consequence of a disturbance in the Assembly, has made another clean sweep of our affairs. Those pentarchs, — puppets, I call them, — those directors have just lost a good blade ; Bernadotte has abandoned them."

"Who will take his place?" asked Gérard, eagerly.

"Milet-Mureau, an old blockhead. A pretty time to choose to let fools sail the ship ! English rockets from all the headlands, and those cursed Chouan cockchafers in the air ! You may rely upon it that some one behind those puppets pulled the wire when they saw we were getting the worst of it."

"How getting the worst of it?"

"Our armies are beaten at all points," replied Hulot, sinking his voice still lower. "The Chouans have intercepted two couriers ; I only received my despatches and last orders by a private messenger sent by Bernadotte just as he was leaving the ministry. Luckily, friends have written me confidentially about this crisis. Fouché has discovered that the tyrant Louis XVIII. has been advised by traitors in Paris to send a leader to his followers in La Vendée. It is thought that Barras is betraying the Republic. At any rate, Pitt and the princes have sent a man, a *ci-devant*, vigorous, daring, full of talent, who intends, by uniting the Chouans with the Vendéans, to pluck the cap of liberty from the head of the Republic. The fellow has lately landed in the Morbihan ; I was the first to hear of it, and I sent the news to those knaves in Paris. 'The Gars' is the name he goes by. All those beasts, 'he added, pointing to Marche-à-Terre,' stick on names which would give a stomach-ache to honest patriots if they bore them. The Gars is now in

this district. The presence of that fellow" — and again he signed to Marche-à-Terre — "as good as tells me he is on our back. But they can't teach an old monkey to make faces; and you've got to help me to get my birds safe into their cage, and as quick as a flash too. A pretty fool I should be if I allowed that *ci-devant*, who dares to come from London with his British gold, to trap me like a crow!"

On learning these secret circumstances, and being well aware that their leader was never unnecessarily alarmed, the two officers saw the dangers of the position. Gérard was about to ask some questions on the political state of Paris, some details of which Hulot had evidently passed over in silence, but a sign from his commander stopped him, and once more drew the eyes of all three to the Chouan. Marche-à-Terre gave no sign of disturbance at being watched. The curiosity of the two officers, who were new to this species of warfare, was greatly excited by this beginning of an affair which seemed to have an almost romantic interest, and they began to joke about it. But Hulot stopped them at once.

"God's thunder!" he cried. "Don't smoke upon the powder-cask; wasting courage for nothing is like carrying water in a basket. Gérard," he added, in the ear of his adjutant, "get nearer, by degrees, to that fellow, and watch him; at the first suspicious action put your sword through him. As for me, I must take measures to carry on the ball if our unseen adversaries choose to open it."

The Chouan paid no attention to the movements of the young officer, and continued to play with his whip, and fling out the lash of it as though he were fishing in the ditch.

Meantime the commandant was saying to Merle, in a low voice: "Give ten picked men to a sergeant, and post them yourself above us on the summit of this slope, just where the path widens to a ledge; there you ought to see the whole length of the route to Ernée. Choose a position where the road is not flanked by woods, and where the sergeant can overlook the country. Take Clef-des-Cœurs; he is very intelligent. This is no laughing matter; I wouldn't give a farthing for our skins if we don't turn the odds in our favor at once."

While Merle was executing this order with a rapidity of which he fully understood the importance, the commandant waved his right hand to enforce silence on the soldiers, who were standing at ease, and laughing and joking around him. With another gesture he ordered them to take up arms: When quiet was restored he turned his eyes from one end of the road to the other, listened with anxious attention as though he hoped to detect some stifled sound, some echo of weapons, or steps which might give warning of the expected attack. His black eye seemed to pierce the woods to an extraordinary depth. Perceiving no indications of danger, he next consulted, like a savage, the ground at his feet, to discover, if possible, the trail of the invisible enemies whose daring was well known to him. Desperate at seeing and hearing nothing to justify his fears, he turned aside from the road and ascended, not without difficulty, one or two hillocks. The other officers and the soldiers, observing the anxiety of a leader in whom they trusted and whose worth was known to them, knew that his extreme watchfulness meant danger; but not suspecting its imminence, they merely stood still and held their breaths by instinct. Like dogs endeavoring to guess

the intentions of a huntsman, whose orders are incomprehensible to them though they faithfully obey him, the soldiers gazed in turn at the valley, at the woods by the roadside, at the stern face of their leader, endeavoring to read their fate. They questioned each other with their eyes, and more than one smile ran from lip to lip.

When Hulot returned to his men with an anxious look, Beau-Pied, a young sergeant who passed for the wit of his company, remarked in a low voice: "Where the deuce have we poked ourselves that an old trooper like Hulot should pull such a gloomy face? He's as solemn as a council of war."

Hulot gave the speaker a stern look, silence being ordered in the ranks. In the hush that ensued, the lagging steps of the conscripts on the creaking sand of the road produced a recurrent sound which added a sort of vague emotion to the general excitement. This indefinable feeling can be understood only by those who have felt their hearts beat in the silence of the night from a painful expectation heightened by some noise, the monotonous recurrence of which seems to distil terror into their minds, drop by drop.

The thought of the commandant, as he returned to his men, was: "Can I be mistaken?" He glanced, with a concentrated anger which flashed like lightning from his eyes, at the stolid, immovable Chouan; a look of savage irony which he fancied he detected in the man's eyes, warned him not to relax in his precautions. Just then Captain Merle, having obeyed Hulot's orders, returned to his side.

"We did well, captain," said the commandant, "to put the few men whose patriotism we can count upon among those conscripts at the rear. Take a dozen more

of our own bravest fellows, with sub-lieutenant Lebrun at their head, and make a rear-guard of them; they'll support the patriots who are there already, and help to shove on that flock of birds and close up the distance between us. I'll wait for you."

The captain disappeared. The commander's eye singled out four men on whose intelligence and quickness he knew he might rely, and he beckoned to them, silently, with the well-known friendly gesture of moving the right forefinger rapidly and repeatedly toward the nose. They came to him.

"You served with me under Hoche," he said, "when we brought to reason those brigands who call themselves 'Chasseurs du Roi;' you know how they hid themselves to swoop down on the Blues."

At this commendation of their intelligence the four soldiers nodded with significant grins. Their heroically martial faces wore that look of careless resignation to fate which evidenced the fact that since the struggle had begun between France and Europe, the ideas of the private soldiers had never passed beyond the cartridge-boxes on their backs or the bayonets in front of them. With their lips drawn together like a purse when the strings are tightened, they looked at their commander attentively with inquiring eyes.

"You know," continued Hulot, who possessed the art of speaking picturesquely as soldier to soldiers, "that it won't do for old hares like us to be caught napping by the Chouans, — of whom there are plenty all round us, or my name's not Hulot. You four are to march in advance and beat up both sides of this road. The detachment will hang fire here. Keep your eyes about you; don't get picked off; and bring me news of what you find — quick!"

So saying he waved his hand towards the suspected heights along the road. The four men, by way of thanks raised the backs of their hands to their battered old three-cornered hats, discolored by rain and ragged with age, and bent their bodies double. One of them, named Larose, a corporal well-known to Hulot, remarked as he clicked his musket: "We'll play 'em a tune on the clarinet, commander."

They started, two to right and two to left of the road; and it was not without some excitement that their comrades watched them disappear. The commandant himself feared that he had sent them to their deaths, and an involuntary shudder seized him as he saw the last of them. Officers and soldiers listened to the gradually lessening sound of their footsteps, with feelings all the more acute because they were carefully hidden. There are occasions when the risk of four lives causes more excitement and alarm than all the slain at Jemmapes. The faces of those trained to war have such various and fugitive expressions that a painter who has to describe them is forced to appeal to the recollections of soldiers and to leave civilians to imagine these dramatic figures; for scenes so rich in detail cannot be rendered in writing, except at interminable length.

Just as the bayonets of the four men were finally lost to sight, Captain Merle returned, having executed the commander's orders with rapidity. Hulot, with two or three sharp commands, put his troop in line of battle and ordered it to return to the summit of La Pèlerine where his little advanced-guard were stationed; walking last himself and looking backward to note any changes that might occur in a scene which Nature had made so

lovely, and man so terrible. As he reached the spot where he had left the Chouan, Marche-à-Terre, who had seen with apparent indifference the various movements of the commander, but was now watching with extraordinary intelligence the two soldiers in the woods to the right, suddenly gave the shrill and piercing cry of the *chouette*, or screech-owl. The three famous smugglers already mentioned were in the habit of using the various intonations of this cry to warn each other of danger or of any event that might concern them. From this came the nickname of "Chuin" which means *chouette* or owl in the dialect of that region. This corrupted word came finally to mean the whole body of those who, in the first uprising, imitated the tactics and the signals of the smugglers.

When Hulot heard that suspicious sound he stopped short and examined the man intently; then he feigned to be taken in by his stupid air, wishing to keep him by him as a barometer which might indicate the movements of the enemy. He therefore checked Gérard, whose hand was on his sword to despatch him; but he placed two soldiers beside the man he now felt to be a spy, and ordered them in a loud, clear voice to shoot him at the next sound he made. In spite of his imminent danger Marche-à-Terre showed not the slightest emotion. The commandant, who was studying him, took note of this apparent insensibility, and remarked to Gérard: "That fool is not so clever as he means to be! It is far from easy to read the face of a Chouan, but the fellow betrays himself by his anxiety to show his nerve. Ha! ha! if he had only pretended fear I should have taken him for a stupid brute. He and I might have made a pair! I came very near falling into

the trap. Yes, we shall undoubtedly be attacked ; but let 'em come ; I 'm all ready now."

As he said these words in a low voice, rubbing his hands with an air of satisfaction, he looked at the Chouan with a jeering eye. Then he crossed his arms on his breast and stood in the road with his favorite officers beside him awaiting the result of his arrangements. Certain that a fight was at hand, he looked at his men composedly.

"There 'll be a row," said Beau-Pied to his comrades in a low voice. "See, the commandant is rubbing his hands."

In critical situations like that in which the detachment and its commander were now placed, life is so clearly at stake that men of nerve make it a point of honor to show coolness and self-possession. These are the moments in which to judge men's souls. The commandant, better informed of the danger than his two officers, took pride in showing his tranquillity. With his eyes moving from Marche-à-Terre to the road and thence to the woods he stood expecting, not without dread, a general volley from the Chouans, whom he believed to be hidden like brigands all around him ; but his face remained impassible. Knowing that the eyes of the soldiers were turned upon him, he wrinkled his brown cheeks pitted with the small-pox, screwed his upper lip, and winked his right eye, a grimace always taken for a smile by his men ; then he tapped Gérard on the shoulder and said : "Now that things are quiet tell me what you wanted to say just now."

"I wanted to ask what this new crisis means, commandant?" was the reply.

"It is not new," said Hulot. "All Europe is

against us, and this time she has got the whip hand. While those Directors are fighting together like horses in a stable without any oats, and letting the government go to bits, the armies are left without supplies or reinforcements. We are getting the worst of it in Italy; we've evacuated Mantua after a series of disasters on the Trebia, and Joubert has just lost a battle at Novi. I only hope Masséna may be able to hold the Swiss passes against Suwarrow. We're done for on the Rhine. The Directory have sent Moreau. The question is, Can he defend the frontier? I hope he may, but the Coalition will end by invading us, and the only general able to save the nation is, unluckily, down in that devilish Egypt; and how is he ever to get back, with England mistress of the Mediterranean?"

"Bonaparte's absence does n't trouble me, commandant," said the young adjutant Gérard, whose intelligent mind had been developed by a fine education. "I am certain the Revolution cannot be brought to naught. Ha! we soldiers have a double mission, — not merely to defend French territory, but to preserve the national soul, the generous principles of liberty, independence, the rights of human reason awakened by our Assemblies and gaining strength, as I believe, from day to day. France is like a traveller bearing a light: he protects it with one hand, and defends himself with the other. If your news is true, we have never for the last ten years been so surrounded with people trying to blow it out. Principles and nation are in danger of perishing together."

"Alas, yes," said Hulot, sighing. "Those clowns of Directors have managed to quarrel with all the men who could sail the ship. Bernadotte, Carnot, all of

them, even Talleyrand, have deserted us. There's not a single good patriot left, except friend Fouché, who holds 'em through the police. There's a man for you! It was he who warned me of the coming insurrection; and here we are, sure enough, caught in a trap."

"If the army does n't take things in hand and manage the government," said Gérard, "those lawyers in Paris will put us back just where we were before the Revolution. A parcel of ninnies! what do they know about governing?"

"I'm always afraid they'll treat with the Bourbons," said Hulot. "Thunder! if they did *that* a pretty pass we should be in, we soldiers!"

"No, no, commandant, it won't come to that," said Gérard. "The army, as you say, will raise its voice, and — provided it does n't choose its words from Pichegru's vocabulary — I am persuaded we have not hacked ourselves to pieces for the last ten years merely to manure the flax and let others spin the thread."

"Well," interposed Captain Merle, "what we have to do now is to act as good patriots and prevent the Chouans from communicating with La Vendée; for, if they once come to an understanding and England gets her finger into the pie, I would n't answer for the cap of the Republic, one and indivisible."

As he spoke the cry of an owl, heard at a distance, interrupted the conversation. Again the commander examined Marche-à-Terre, whose impassible face still gave no sign. The conscripts, their ranks closed up by an officer, now stood like a herd of cattle in the road, about a hundred feet distant from the escort, which was drawn up in line of battle. Behind them stood the rear-guard of soldiers and patriots, picked men, com-

manded by Lieutenant Lebrun. Hulot cast his eyes over this arrangement of his forces and looked again at the picket of men posted in advance upon the road. Satisfied with what he saw he was about to give the order to march, when the tricolor cockades of the two soldiers he had sent to beat the woods to the left caught his eye ; he waited therefore till the two others, who had gone to the right, should reappear.

“ Perhaps the ball will open over there,” he said to his officers, pointing to the woods from which the two men did not emerge.

While the first two made their report Hulot’s attention was distracted momentarily from Marche-à-Terre. The Chouan at once sent his owl’s-cry to an apparently vast distance, and before the men who guarded him could raise their muskets and take aim he had struck them a blow with his whip which felled them, and rushed away. A terrible discharge of fire-arms from the woods just above the place where the Chouan had been sitting brought down six or eight soldiers. Marche-à-Terre, at whom several men had fired without touching him, vanished into the woods after climbing the slope with the agility of a wild-cat ; as he did so his sabots rolled into the ditch and his feet were seen to be shod with the thick, hobnailed shoes always worn by the Chouans.

At the first cries uttered by the Chouans, the conscripts sprang into the woods to the right like a flock of birds taking flight at the approach of a man.

“ Fire on those scoundrels ! ” cried Hulot.

The company fired, but the conscripts knew well how to shelter themselves behind trees, and before the soldiers could reload they were out of sight.

“What’s the use of *decreeing* levies in the departments?” said Hulot. “It is only such idiots as the Directory who would expect any good of a draft in this region. The Assembly had much better stop voting more shoes and money and munitions, and see that we get what belongs to us.”

At this moment the two skirmishers sent out on the right were seen returning with evident difficulty. The one that was least wounded supported his comrade, whose blood was moistening the earth. The two poor fellows were half-way down the slope when Marche-à-Terre showed his ugly face, and took so true an aim that both Blues fell together and rolled heavily into the ditch. The Chouan’s monstrous head was no sooner seen than thirty muzzles were levelled at him, but, like a figure in a pantomime, he disappeared in a second among the tufts of gorse. These events, which have taken so many words to tell, happened instantaneously, and in another moment the rear-guard of patriots and soldiers joined the main body of the escort.

“Forward!” cried Hulot.

The company moved quickly to the higher and more open ground on which the picket guard was already stationed. There, the commander formed his troop once more in line of battle; but, as the Chouans made no further hostile demonstrations, he began to think that the deliverance of the conscripts might have been the sole object of the ambuscade.

“Their cries,” he said to his two friends, “prove that they are not numerous. We’ll advance at a quick step, and possibly we may be able to reach Ernée without getting them on our backs.”

These words were overheard by one of the patriot

conscripts, who stepped from the ranks, and said respectfully : —

“General, I have already fought the Chouans ; may I be allowed a word ?”

“A lawyer,” whispered Hulot to Merle. “They always want to harangue. Argue away,” he said to the young man.

“General, the Chouans have no doubt brought arms for those escaped recruits. Now, if we try to outmarch them, they will catch us in the woods and shoot every one of us before we can get to Ernée. We must argue, as you call it, with cartridges. During the skirmish, which will last more time than you think for, some of us ought to go back and fetch the National Guard and the militia from Fougères.”

“Then you think there are a good many Chouans ?”

“Judge for yourself, citizen commander.”

He led Hulot to a place where the sand had been stirred as with a rake ; then he took him to the opening of a wood-path, where the leaves were scattered and trampled into the earth, — unmistakable signs of the passage of a large body of men.

“Those were the ‘gars’ from Vitré,” said the man, who came himself from Fougères ; “they are on their way to Lower Normandy.”

“What is your name ?” asked Hulot.

“Gudin, commander.”

“Well, then, Gudin, I make you a corporal. You seem to me trustworthy. Select a man to send to Fougères ; but stay yourself by me. In the first place, however, take two or three of your comrades and bring in the muskets and ammunition of the poor fellows those brigands have rolled into the ditch. These

Bretons," added Hulot to Gérard, "will make famous infantry if they take to rations."

Gudin's emissary started on a run to Fougères by a wood-road to the left; the soldiers looked to their arms, and awaited an attack; the commandant passed along their line, smiling to them, and then placed himself, with his officers, a little in front of it. Silence fell once more, but it was of short duration. Three hundred or more Chouans, their clothing identical with that of the late recruits, burst from the woods to the right with actual howls and planted themselves, without any semblance of order, on the road directly in front of the feeble detachment of the Blues. The commandant thereupon ranged his soldiers in two equal parts, each with a front of ten men. Between them, he placed the twelve recruits, to whom he hastily gave arms, putting himself at their head. This little centre was protected by the two wings, of twenty-five men each, which manœuvred on either side the road under the orders of Merle and Gérard; their object being to catch the Chouans on the flank and prevent them from posting themselves as sharp-shooters among the trees, where they could pick off the Blues without risk to themselves; for in these wars the Republican troops never knew where to look for an enemy.

These arrangements, hastily made, gave confidence to the soldiers, and they advanced in silence upon the Chouans. At the end of a few seconds each side fired, with the loss of several men. At this moment the two wings of the Republicans, to whom the Chouans had nothing to oppose, came upon their flanks, and, with a close, quick volley, sent death and disorder among the enemy. This manœuvre very nearly equalized the

numerical strength of the two parties. But the Chouan nature was so intrepid, their will so firm, that they did not give way; their losses scarcely staggered them; they simply closed up and attempted to surround the dark and well-formed little party of the Blues, which covered so little ground that it looked from a distance like a queen-bee surrounded by the swarm.

The Chouans might have carried the day at this moment if the two wings commanded by Merle and Gérard had not succeeded in getting in two volleys which took them diagonally on their rear. The Blues of the two wings ought to have remained in position and continued to pick off in this way their terrible enemies; but excited by the danger of their little main body, then completely surrounded by the Chouans, they flung themselves headlong into the road with fixed bayonets and made the battle even for a few moments. Both sides fought with a stubbornness intensified by the cruelty and fury of the partisan spirit which made this war exceptional. Each man, observant of danger, was silent. The scene was gloomy and cold as death itself. Nothing was heard through the clash of arms and the grinding of the sand under foot but the moans and exclamations of those who fell, either dead or badly wounded. The twelve loyal recruits in the republican main body protected the commandant (who was guiding his men and giving orders) with such courage that more than once several of the soldiers called out "Bravo, conscripts!"

Hulot, imperturbable and with an eye to everything, presently remarked among the Chouans a man who, like himself, was evidently surrounded by picked men, and was therefore, no doubt, the leader of the attacking

party. He was anxious to see this man distinctly, and he made many efforts to distinguish his features, but in vain; they were hidden by the red caps and broad-brimmed hats of those about him. Hulot did, however, see Marche-à-Terre beside this leader, repeating his orders in a hoarse voice, his own carbine, meanwhile, being far from inactive. The commandant grew impatient at being thus baffled. Waving his sword, he urged on the recruits and charged the centre of the Chouans with such fury that he broke through their line and came close to their chief, whose face, however, was still hidden by a broad-brimmed felt hat with a white cockade. But the invisible leader, surprised at so bold an attack, retreated a step or two and raised his hat abruptly, thus enabling Hulot to get a hasty idea of his appearance.

He was young, — Hulot thought him to be about twenty-five; he wore a hunting-jacket of green cloth, and a white belt containing pistols. His heavy shoes were hobnailed like those of the Chouans; leather leggings came to his knees covering the ends of his breeches of very coarse drilling, and completing a costume which showed off a slender and well-poised figure of medium height. Furious that the Blues should thus have approached him, he pulled his hat again over his face and sprang towards them. But he was instantly surrounded by Marche-à-Terre and several Chouans. Hulot thought he perceived between the heads which clustered about this young leader, a broad red ribbon worn across his chest. The eyes of the commandant, caught by this royal decoration (then almost forgotten by republicans), turned quickly to the young man's face, which, however, he soon lost sight of under the ne-

cessity of controlling and protecting his own little troop. Though he had barely time to notice a pair of brilliant eyes (the color of which escaped him), fair hair and delicate features bronzed by the sun, he was much struck by the dazzling whiteness of the neck, relieved by a black cravat carelessly knotted. The fiery attitude of the young leader proved him to be a soldier of the stamp of those who bring a certain conventional poesy into battle. His well-gloved hand waved above his head a sword which gleamed in the sunlight. His whole person gave an impression both of elegance and strength. An air of passionate self-devotion, enhanced by the charms of youth and distinguished manners, made this *émigré* a graceful image of the French *noblesse*. He presented a strong contrast to Hulot, who, ten feet distant from him, was quite as vivid an image of the vigorous Republic for which the old soldier was fighting; his stern face, his well-worn blue uniform with its shabby red facings and its blackened epaulettes hanging back of his shoulders, being visible signs of its needs and character.

The graceful attitude and expression of the young man were not lost on the commandant, who exclaimed as he pressed towards him: "Come on, opera-dancer, come on, and let me crush you!"

The royalist leader, provoked by his momentary disadvantage, advanced with an angry movement, but at the same moment the men who were about him rushed forward and flung themselves with fury on the Blues. Suddenly a soft, clear voice was heard above the din of battle saying: "Here died Saint-Lescure! Shall we not avenge him?"

At the magic words the efforts of the Chouans be-

came terrible, and the soldiers of the Republic had great difficulty in maintaining themselves without breaking their little line of battle.

"If he was n't a young man," thought Hulot, as he retreated step by step, "we should n't have been attacked in this way. Who ever heard of the Chouans fighting an open battle? Well, all the better! they won't shoot us off like dogs along the road." Then, raising his voice till it echoed through the woods, he exclaimed: "Come on, my men! Shall we let ourselves be *fooled* by those brigands?"

The word here given is but a feeble equivalent of the one the brave commander used; but every veteran can substitute the real one, which was far more soldierly in character.

"Gérard! Merle!" added Hulot, "call in your men, form them into a battalion, take the rear, fire upon those dogs, and let's make an end of this!"

The order was difficult to obey, for the young chief, hearing Hulot's voice, cried out: "By Saint Anne of Auray, don't let them get away! Spread out, spread out, my lads!" and each of the two wings of the Blues was followed by Chouans who were fully as obstinate and far superior in numbers. The Republicans were surrounded on all sides by the Goatskins uttering their savage cries, which were more like howls.

"Hold your tongues, gentlemen," cried Beau-Pied; "we can't hear ourselves be killed."

This jest revived the courage of the Blues. Instead of fighting only at one point, the Republicans spread themselves to three different points on the table-land of La Pèlerine, and the rattle of musketry woke all the echoes of the valleys, hitherto so peaceful beneath it.

Victory might have remained doubtful for many hours, or the fight might have come to an end for want of combatants, for Blues and Chouans were equally brave and obstinate. Each side was growing more and more incensed, when the sound of a drum in the distance told that a body of men must be crossing the valley of Couësson.

“There’s the National Guard of Fougères!” cried Gudin, in a loud voice; “my man has brought them.”

The words reached the ears of the young leader of the Chouans and his ferocious aide-de-camp, and the royalists made a hasty retrograde movement, checked, however, by a brutal shout from Marche-à-Terre. After two or three orders given by the leader in a low voice, and transmitted by Marche-à-Terre in the Breton dialect, the Chouans made good their retreat with a cleverness which disconcerted the Republicans and even the commandant. At the first word of command they formed in line, presenting a good front, behind which the wounded retreated, and the others reloaded their guns. Then, suddenly, with the agility already shown by Marche-à-Terre, the wounded were taken over the brow of the eminence to the right of the road, while half the others followed them slowly to occupy the summit, where nothing could be seen of them by the Blues but their bold heads. There they made a rampart of the trees and pointed the muzzles of their guns on the Republicans, who were rapidly reformed under reiterated orders from Hulot and turned to face the remainder of the Chouans, who were still before them in the road. The latter retreated slowly, disputing the ground and wheeling so as to bring themselves under cover of their comrades’ fire. When they reached the broad ditch

which bordered the road, they scaled the high bank on the other side, braving the fire of the Republicans, which was sufficiently well-directed to fill the ditch with dead bodies. The Chouans already on the summit answered with a fire that was no less deadly. At that moment the National Guard of Fougères reached the scene of action at a quick step, and its mere presence put an end to the affair. The Guard and some of the soldiers crossed the road and began to enter the woods, but the commandant called to them in his martial voice, "Do you want to be annihilated over there?"

The victory remained to the Republicans, though not without heavy loss. All the battered old hats were hung on the points of the bayonets and the muskets held aloft, while the soldiers shouted with one voice: "Vive la République!" Even the wounded, sitting by the roadside, shared in the general enthusiasm; and Hulot, pressing Gérard's hand, exclaimed: —

"Ha, ha! those are what I call *veterans*!"

Merle was directed to bury the dead in a ravine; while another party of men attended to the removal of the wounded. The carts and horses of the neighboring farmers were put into requisition, and the suffering men were carefully laid on the clothing of the dead. Before the little column started, the National Guard of Fougères turned over to Hulot a Chouan, dangerously wounded, whom they had captured at the foot of the slope up which his comrades had escaped, and where he had fallen from weakness.

"Thanks for your help, citizens," said the commandant. "God's thunder! if it hadn't been for you, we should have had a pretty bad quarter of an hour. Take care of yourselves; the war has begun.

Adieu, friends." Then, turning to the prisoner, he asked, "What's the name of your general?"

"The Gars."

"Who? Marche-à-Terre?"

"No, the Gars."

"Where does the Gars come from?"

To this question the prisoner, whose face was convulsed with suffering, made no reply; he took out his beads and began to say his prayers.

"The Gars is no doubt that young *ci-devant* with the black cravat, — sent by the tyrant and his allies Pitt and Coburg."

At these words the Chouan raised his head proudly and said: "Sent by God and the king!" He uttered the words with an energy which exhausted his strength. The commandant saw the difficulty of questioning a dying man, whose countenance expressed his gloomy fanaticism, and he turned away his head with a frown. Two soldiers, friends of those whom Marche-à-Terre had so brutally killed with the butt of his whip, stepped back a pace or two, took aim at the Chouan, whose fixed eyes did not blink at the muzzles of their guns, fired at short range, and brought him down. When they approached the body to strip it, the dying man found strength to cry out loudly, "Vive le roi!"

"Yes, yes, you canting hypocrite," cried Clef-des-Cœurs; "go and make your report to that Virgin of yours. Didn't he shout in our faces, 'Vive le roi!' when we thought him cooked?"

"Here are his papers, commandant," said Beau-Pied.

"Ho! ho!" cried Clef-des-Cœurs. "Come, all of you, and see this minion of the good God with colors on his stomach!"

Hulot and several soldiers came round the body, now entirely naked, and saw upon its breast a blue tattooing in the form of a swollen heart. It was the sign of initiation into the brotherhood of the Sacred Heart. Above this sign were the words, "Marie Lambrequin," no doubt the man's name.

"Look at that, Clef-des-Cœurs," said Beau-Pied; "it would take you a hundred years to find out what that accoutrement is good for."

"What should I know about the Pope's uniform?" replied Clef-des-Cœurs, scornfully.

"You worthless bog-trotter, you'll never learn anything," retorted Beau-Pied. "Don't you see that they've promised that poor fool that he shall live again, and he has painted his gizzard in order to find himself?"

At this sally — which was not without some foundation — even Hulot joined in the general hilarity. At this moment Merle returned, and the burial of the dead being completed and the wounded placed more or less comfortably in two carts, the rest of the late escort formed in two lines round the improvised ambulances, and descended the slope of the mountain towards Maine, where the beautiful valley of La Pèlerine, a rival to that of Couësson lay before it.

Hulot with his two officers followed the troop slowly, hoping to get safely to Ernée where the wounded could be cared for. The fight we have just described, which was almost forgotten in the midst of the greater events which were soon to occur, was called by the name of the mountain on which it took place. It obtained some notice at the West, where the inhabitants, observant of this second uprising, noticed on this occasion a great change in the manner in which the Chouans now made

war. In earlier days they would never have attacked so large a detachment. According to Hulot the young royalist whom he had seen was undoubtedly the Gars, the new general sent to France by the princes, who, following the example of the other royalist chiefs, concealed his real name and title under one of those pseudonyms called "noms de guerre." This circumstance made the commandant quite as uneasy after his melancholy victory as he had been before it while expecting the attack. He turned several times to consider the table-land of La Pèlerine which he was leaving behind him, across which he could still hear faintly at intervals the drums of the National Guard descending into the valley of Couësnon at the same time that the Blues were descending into that of La Pèlerine.

"Can either of you," he said to his two friends, "guess the motives of that attack of the Chouans? To them, fighting is a matter of business, and I can't see what they expected to gain by this attack. They have lost at least a hundred men, and we" — he added, screwing up his right cheek and winking by way of a smile, "have lost only sixty. God's thunder! I don't understand that sort of speculation. The scoundrels need n't have attacked us; we might just as well have been allowed to pass like letters through the post — No, I can't see what good it has done them to bullet-hole our men," he added, with a sad shake of his head toward the carts. "Perhaps they only intended to say good-day to us."

"But they carried off our recruits, commander," said Merle.

"The recruits could have skipped like frogs into the woods at any time, and we should never have gone after

them, especially if those fellows had fired a single volley," returned Hulot. "No, no, there's something behind all this." Again he turned and looked at La Pèlerine. "See!" he cried; "see there!"

Though they were now at a long distance from the fatal plateau, they could easily distinguish Marche-à-Terre and several Chouans who were again occupying it.

"Double-quick, march!" cried Hulot to his men, "open your compasses and trot the steeds faster than that! Are your legs frozen?"

These words drove the little troop into rapid motion.

"There's a mystery, and it's hard to make out," continued Hulot, speaking to his friends. "God grant it isn't explained by muskets at Ernée. I'm very much afraid we shall find the road to Mayenne cut off by the king's men."

The strategical problem which troubled the commandant was causing quite as much uneasiness to the persons whom he had just seen on the summit of Mont Pèlerine. As soon as the drums of the National Guard were out of hearing and Marche-à-Terre had seen the Blues at the foot of the declivity, he gave the owl's cry joyously, and the Chouans reappeared, but their numbers were less. Some were no doubt busy in taking care of the wounded in the little village of La Pèlerine, situated on the side of the mountain which looks toward the valley of Couësson. Two or three chiefs of what were called the "Chasseurs du Roi" clustered about Marche-à-Terre. A few feet apart sat the young noble called The Gars, on a granite rock, absorbed in thoughts excited by the difficulties of his enterprise, which now began to show themselves. Marche-à-Terre screened

his forehead with his hand from the rays of the sun, and looked gloomily at the road by which the Blues were crossing the valley of La Pèlerine. His small black eyes could see what was happening on the hill-slopes on the other side of the valley.

"The Blues will intercept the messenger," said the angry voice of one of the leaders who stood near him.

"By Saint Anne of Auray!" exclaimed another. "Why did you make us fight? Was it to save your own skin from the Blues?"

Marche-à-Terre darted a venomous look at his questioner and struck the ground with his heavy carbine.

"Am I your leader?" he asked. Then after a pause he added, pointing to the remains of Hulot's detachment, "If you had all fought as I did not one of those Blues would have escaped, and the coach could have got here safely."

"They'd never have thought of escorting it or holding it back if we had let them go by without a fight. No, you wanted to save your precious skin and get out of their hands — He has bled us for the sake of his own snout," continued the orator, "and made us lose twenty thousand francs in good coin."

"Snout yourself!" cried Marche-à-Terre, retreating three steps and aiming at his aggressor. "It isn't that you hate the Blues, but you love the gold. Die without confession and be damned, for you haven't taken the sacrament for a year."

This insult so incensed the Chouan that he turned pale and a low growl came from his chest as he aimed in turn at Marche-à-Terre. The young chief sprang between them and struck their weapons from their hands with the barrel of his own carbine; then he

demanded an explanation of the dispute, for the conversation had been carried on in the Breton dialect, an idiom with which he was not familiar.

"Monsieur le marquis," said Marche-à-Terre, as he ended his account of the quarrel, "it is all the more unreasonable in them to find fault with me because I have left Pille-Miche behind me; he'll know how to save the coach for us."

"What!" exclaimed the young man, angrily, "are you waiting here, all of you, to pillage that coach? — a parcel of cowards who could n't win a victory in the first fight to which I led you! But why should you win if that's your object? The defenders of God and the king are thieves, are they? By Saint Anne of Auray! I'd have you know, we are making war against the Republic, and not robbing travellers. Those who are guilty in future of such shameful actions shall not receive absolution, nor any of the favors reserved for the faithful servants of the king."

A murmur came from the group of Chouans, and it was easy to see that the authority of the new chief was about to be disputed. The young man, on whom this effect of his words was by no means lost, was thinking of the best means of maintaining the dignity of the command, when the trot of a horse was heard in the vicinity. All heads turned in the direction from which the sound came. A lady appeared, sitting astride of a little Breton horse, which she put at a gallop as soon as she saw the young leader, so as to reach the group of Chouans as quickly as possible.

"What is the matter?" she asked, looking first at the Chouans and then at their chief.

"Could you believe it, madame? they are waiting to

rob the diligence from Mayenne to Fougères when we have just had a skirmish, in order to release the conscripts of Fougères, which has cost us a great many men without defeating the Blues."

"Well, where's the harm of that?" asked the young lady, to whom the natural shrewdness of a woman explained the whole scene. "You have lost men, but there's no lack of others; the coach is bringing gold, and there's always a lack of that. We bury men, who go to heaven, and we take money, which goes into the pockets of heroes. I don't see the difficulty."

The Chouans approved of her speech by unanimous smiles.

"Do you see nothing in all that to make you blush?" said the young man, in a low voice. "Are you in such need of money that you must pillage on the high-road?"

"I am so eager for it, marquis, that I should put my heart in pawn if it were not already captured," she said, smiling coquettishly. "But where did you get the strange idea that you could manage Chouans without letting them rob a few Blues here and there? Don't you know the saying, 'Thieving as an owl'?—and that's a Chouan. Besides," she said, raising her voice to be heard by the men, "it is just; haven't the Blues seized the property of the Church, and our own?"

Another murmur, very different from the growl with which the Chouans had answered their leader, greeted these words. The young man's face grew darker; he took the young lady aside and said in the annoyed tone of a well-bred man, "Will those gentlemen be at La Vivetière on the appointed day?"

"Yes," she replied, "all of them, the Claimant, Grand-Jacques, and perhaps Ferdinand."

"Then allow me to return there. I cannot sanction such robbery. Yes, madame, I call it robbery. There may be honor in being robbed, but —"

"Well, well," she said, interrupting him, "then I shall have your share of the booty, and I am much obliged to you for giving it up to me; the extra sum will be extremely useful, for my mother has delayed sending me money, so that I am almost destitute."

"Adieu!" cried the marquis.

He turned away, but the lady ran after him.

"Why won't you stay with me?" she said, giving him the look, half-despotic, half-caressing, with which women who have a right to a man's respect let him know their wishes.

"You are going to pillage that coach?"

"Pillage? what a word!" she said. "Let me explain to you —"

"Explain nothing," he said taking her hand and kissing it with the superficial gallantry of a courtier. "Listen to me," he added after a short pause: "if I were to stay here while they capture that diligence our people would kill me, for I should certainly —"

"Not kill them," she said quickly, "for they would bind your hands, with all the respect that is due to your rank; then, having levied the necessary contribution for their equipment, subsistence, and munitions from our enemies, they would unbind you and obey you blindly."

"And you wish me to command such men under such circumstances? If my life is necessary to the cause which I defend allow me at any rate to save the honor of my position. If I withdraw now I can ignore this base act. I will return, in order to escort you."

So saying, he rapidly disappeared. The young lady listened to his receding steps with evident displeasure. When the sound on the dried leaves ceased, she stood for a moment as if confounded, then she hastily returned to the Chouans. With a gesture of contempt she said to Marche-à-Terre, who helped her to dismount, "That young man wants to make regular war on the Republic! Ah, well! he'll get over that in a few days. How he treated me!" she thought, presently.

She seated herself on the rock where the marquis had been sitting, and silently awaited the arrival of the coach. It was one of the phenomena of the times, and not the least of them, that this young and noble lady should be flung by violent partisanship into the struggle of monarchies against the spirit of the age, and be driven by the strength of her feelings into actions of which it may almost be said she was not conscious. In this she resembled others of her time who were led away by an enthusiasm which was often productive of noble deeds. Like her, many women played heroic or blameworthy parts in the fierce struggle. The royalist cause had no emissaries so devoted and so active as these women; but none of the heroines on that side paid for mistaken devotion or for actions forbidden to their sex, with a greater expiation than did this lady when, seated on that wayside rock, she was forced to admire the young leader's noble disdain and loyalty to principle. Insensibly she dropped into reverie. Bitter memories made her long for the innocence of her early years, and regret that she had escaped being a victim of the Revolution whose victorious march could no longer be arrested by feeble hands.

The coach, which, as we now see, had much to do with the attack of the Chouans, had started from the little town of Ernée a few moments before the skirmishing began. Nothing pictures a region so well as the state of its social material. From this point of view the coach deserves a mention. The Revolution itself was powerless to destroy it; in fact, it still rolls to the present day. When Turgot bought up the privileges of a company, obtained under Louis XIV., for the exclusive right of transporting travellers from one part of the kingdom to another, and instituted the lines of coaches called the "turgotines," all the old vehicles of the former company flocked into the provinces. One of these shabby coaches was now plying between Mayenne and Fougères. A few objectors called it the "turgotine," partly to mimic Paris and partly to deride a minister who attempted innovations. This turgotine was a wretched cabriolet on two high wheels, in the depths of which two persons, if rather fat, could with difficulty have stowed themselves. The narrow quarters of this rickety machine not admitting of any crowding, and the box which formed the seat being kept exclusively for the postal service, the travellers who had any baggage were forced to keep it between their legs, already tortured by being squeezed into a sort of little box in shape like a bellows. The original color of coach and running-gear was an insoluble enigma. Two leather curtains, very difficult to adjust in spite of their long service, were supposed to protect the occupants from cold and rain. The driver, perched on a plank seat like those of the worst Parisian "coucous," shared in the conversation by reason of his position between his victims, biped and quadruped. The equipage pre-

sented various fantastic resemblances to decrepit old men who have gone through a goodly number of catarrhs and apoplexies and whom death respects; it moaned as it rolled, and squeaked spasmodically. Like a traveller overtaken by sleep, it rocked alternately forward and back, as though it tried to resist the violent action of two little Breton horses which dragged it along a road which was more than rough. This monument of a past era contained three travellers, who, on leaving Ernée, where they had changed horses, continued a conversation begun with the driver before reaching the little town.

"What makes you think the Chouans are hereabouts?" said the coachman. "The Ernée people tell me that Commandant Hulot has not yet started from Fougères."

"Ho, ho, friend driver!" said the youngest of the travellers, "you risk nothing but your own carcass! If you had a thousand francs about you, as I have, and were known to be a good patriot, you would n't take it so easy."

"You are pretty free with your tongue, any way," said the driver, shaking his head.

"Count your lambs, and the wolf will eat them," remarked another of the travellers.

This man, who was dressed in black, seemed to be about forty years old, and was, probably, the rector of some parish in the neighborhood. His chin rested on a double fold of flesh, and his florid complexion indicated a priest. Though short and fat, he displayed some agility when required to get in or out of the vehicle.

"Perhaps you are both Chouans!" cried the man of

the thousand francs, whose ample goatskin, covering trousers of good cloth and a clean waistcoat, bespoke a rich farmer. "By the soul of Saint Robespierre! I swear you shall be roughly handled."

He turned his gray eyes from the driver to his fellow-travellers and showed them a pistol in his belt.

"Bretons are not afraid of that," said the rector, disdainfully. "Besides, do we look like men who want your money?"

Every time the word "money" was mentioned the driver was silent, and the rector had wit enough to doubt whether the patriot had any at all, and to suspect that the driver was carrying a good deal.

"Are you well laden, Coupiau?" he asked.

"Oh, no, Monsieur Gudin," replied the coachman. "I'm carrying next to nothing."

The priest watched the faces of the patriot and Coupiau as the latter made this answer, and both were imperturbable.

"So much the better for you," remarked the patriot. "I can now take measures to save my property in case of danger."

Such despotic assumption nettled Coupiau, who answered gruffly: "I am the master of my own carriage, and so long as I drive you —"

"Are you a patriot, or are you a Chouan?" said the other, sharply interrupting him.

"Neither the one nor the other," replied Coupiau. "I'm a postilion, and, what is more, a Breton, — consequently, I fear neither Blues nor nobles."

"Noble thieves!" cried the patriot, ironically.

"They only take back what was stolen from them," said the rector, vehemently.

The two men looked at each other in the whites of their eyes, if we may use a phrase so colloquial. Sitting back in the vehicle was a third traveller who took no part in the discussion, and preserved a deep silence. The driver and the patriot and even Gudin paid no attention to this mute individual; he was, in truth, one of those uncomfortable, unsocial travellers who are found sometimes in a stage-coach, like a patient calf that is being carried, bound, to the nearest market. Such travellers begin by filling their full legal space, and end by sleeping, without the smallest respect for their fellow-beings, on a neighbor's shoulder. The patriot, Gudin, and the driver had let him alone, thinking him asleep, after discovering that it was useless to talk to a man whose stolid face betrayed an existence spent in measuring yards of linen, and an intellect employed in selling them at a good percentage above cost. This fat little man, doubled-up in his corner, opened his porcelain-blue eyes every now and then, and looked at each speaker with a sort of terror. He appeared to be afraid of his fellow-travellers and to care very little about the Chouans. When he looked at the driver, however, they seemed to be a pair of freemasons. Just then the first volley of musketry was heard on La Pèlerine. Coupiau, frightened, stopped the coach.

"Oh! oh!" said the priest, as if he had some means of judging, "it is a serious engagement; there are many men."

"The trouble for us, Monsieur Gudin," cried Coupiau, "is to know which side will win."

The faces of all became unanimously anxious.

"Let us put up the coach at that inn which I see

over there," said the patriot; "we can hide it till we know the result of the fight."

The advice seemed so good that Coupiau followed it. The patriot helped him to conceal the coach behind a wood-pile; the abbé seized the occasion to pull Coupiau aside and say to him, in a low voice: "Has he really any money?"

"Hey, Monsieur Gudin, if it gets into the pockets of your Reverence, they won't be weighed down with it."

When the Blues marched by, after the encounter on La Pèlerine, they were in such haste to reach Ernée that they passed the little inn without halting. At the sound of their hasty march, Gudin and the innkeeper, stirred by curiosity, went to the gate of the courtyard to watch them. Suddenly, the fat ecclesiastic rushed to a soldier who was lagging in the rear.

"Gudin!" he cried, "you wrong-headed fellow, have you joined the Blues? My lad, you are surely not in earnest?"

"Yes, uncle," answered the corporal. "I've sworn to defend France."

"Unhappy boy! you'll lose your soul," said the uncle, trying to rouse his nephew to the religious sentiments which are so powerful in the Breton breast.

"Uncle," said the young man, "if the king had placed himself at the head of his armies, I don't say but what—"

"Fool! who is talking to you about the king? Does your republic give abbeyes? No, it has upset everything. How do you expect to get on in life? Stay with us; sooner or later we shall triumph and you'll be counsellor to some parliament."

"Parliaments!" said young Gudin, in a mocking tone. "Good-by, uncle."

"You sha'n't have a penny at my death," cried his uncle, in a rage. "I'll disinherit you."

"Thank you, uncle," said the Republican, as they parted.

The fumes of the cider which the patriot copiously bestowed on Coupiau during the passage of the little troop had somewhat dimmed the driver's perceptions, but he roused himself joyously when the innkeeper, having questioned the soldiers, came back to the inn and announced that the Blues were victorious. He at once brought out the coach and before long it was wending its way across the valley.

When the Blues reached an acclivity on the road from which the plateau of La Pèlerine could again be seen in the distance, Hulot turned round to discover if the Chouans were still occupying it, and the sun, glinting on the muzzles of the guns, showed them to him, each like a dazzling spot. Giving a last glance to the valley of La Pèlerine before turning into that of Ernée, he thought he saw Coupiau's vehicle on the road he had just traversed.

"Is n't that the Mayenne coach?" he said to his two officers.

They looked at the venerable turgotine, and easily recognized it.

"But," said Hulot, "how did we fail to meet it?"

Merle and Gérard looked at each other in silence.

"Another enigma!" cried the commandant. "But I begin to see the meaning of it all."

At the same moment Marche-à-Terre, who also knew the turgotine, called his comrades' attention to it, and the general shout of joy which they sent up roused the young lady from her reflections. She advanced a little

distance and saw the coach, which was beginning the ascent of La Pèlerine with fatal rapidity. The luckless vehicle soon reached the plateau. The Chouans, who had meantime hidden themselves, swooped on their prey with hungry celerity. The silent traveller slipped to the floor of the carriage, bundling himself up into the semblance of a bale.

"Well done!" cried Coupiau from his wooden perch, pointing to the man in the goatskin; "you must have scented this patriot who has lots of gold in his pouch —"

The Chouans greeted these words with roars of laughter, crying out: "Pille-Miche! hey, Pille-Miche! Pille-Miche!"

Amid the laughter, to which Pille-Miche responded like an echo, Coupiau came down from his seat quite crestfallen. When the famous Cibot, otherwise called Pille-Miche, helped his neighbor to get out of the coach, a respectful murmur was heard among the Chouans.

"It is the Abbé Gudin!" cried several voices. At this respected name every hat was off, and the men knelt down before the priest as they asked his blessing, which he gave solemnly.

"Pille-Miche here could trick Saint Peter and steal the keys of Paradise," said the rector, slapping that worthy on the shoulder. "If it had n't been for him, the Blues would have intercepted us."

Then, noticing the lady, the abbé went to speak to her apart. Marche-à-Terre, who had meantime briskly opened the boot of the cabriolet, held up to his companions, with savage joy, a bag, the shape of which betrayed its contents to be rolls of coin. It did not

take long to divide the booty. Each Chouan received his share, so carefully apportioned that the division was made without the slightest dispute. Then Marche-à-Terre went to the lady and the priest, and offered them each about six thousand francs.

"Can I conscientiously accept this money, Monsieur Gudin?" said the lady, feeling a need of justification.

"Why not, madame? In former days the Church approved of the confiscation of the property of Protestants, and there's far more reason for confiscating that of these revolutionists, who deny God, destroy chapels, and persecute religion."

The abbé then joined example to precept by accepting, without the slightest scruple, the novel sort of tithe which Marche-à-Terre offered to him. "Besides," he added, "I can now devote all I possess to the service of God and the king; for my nephew has joined the Blues, and I disinherit him."

Coupiau was bemoaning himself and declaring that he was ruined.

"Join us," said Marche-à-Terre, "and you shall have your share."

"They'll say I let the coach be robbed on purpose if I return without signs of violence."

"Oh, is that all?" exclaimed Marche-à-Terre.

He gave a signal and a shower of bullets riddled the turgotine. At this unexpected volley the old vehicle gave forth such a lamentable cry that the Chouans, superstitious by nature, recoiled in terror; but Marche-à-Terre caught sight of the pallid face of the silent traveller rising from the floor of the coach.

"You've got another fowl in your coop," he said in a low voice to Coupiau.

“Yes,” said the driver; “but I make it a condition of my joining you that I be allowed to take that worthy man safe and sound to Fougères. I’m pledged to it in the name of Saint Anne of Auray.”

“Who is he?” asked Pille-Miche.

“That I can’t tell you,” replied Coupiau.

“Let him alone!” said Marche-à-Terre, shoving Pille-Miche with his elbow; “he has vowed by Saint Anne of Auray, and he must keep his word.”

“Very good,” said Pille-Miche, addressing Coupiau; “but mind you don’t go down the mountain too fast; we shall overtake you,—a good reason why; I want to see the cut of your traveller, and give him his passport.”

Just then the gallop of a horse coming rapidly up the slopes of La Pèlerine was heard, and the young chief presently reappeared. The lady hastened to conceal the bag of plunder which she held in her hand.

“You can keep that money without any scruple,” said the young man, touching the arm which the lady had put behind her. “Here is a letter for you which I have just found among mine which were waiting for me at La Vivetière; it is from your mother.” Then, looking at the Chouans who were disappearing into the woods, and at the turgotine which was now on its way to the valley of Couësson, he added: “After all my haste I see I am too late. God grant I am deceived in my suspicions!”

“It was my poor mother’s money!” cried the lady, after opening her letter, the first lines of which drew forth her exclamation.

A smothered laugh came from the woods, and the young man himself could not help smiling as he saw

the lady holding in her hand the bag containing her share in the pillage of her own money. She herself began to laugh.

“ Well, well, marquis, God be praised ! this time, at least, you can’t blame me,” she said, smiling.

“ Levity in everything ! even your remorse ! ” said the young man.

She colored and looked at the marquis with so genuine a contrition that he was softened. The abbé politely returned to her, with an equivocal manner, the sum he had received ; then he followed the young leader who took the by-way through which he had come. Before following them the lady made a sign to Marche-à-Terre, who came to her.

“ Advance towards Mortagne,” she said to him in a low voice. “ I know that the Blues are constantly sending large sums of money in coin to Alençon to pay for their supplies of war. If I allow you and your comrades to keep what you captured to-day it is only on condition that you repay it later. But be careful that the Gars knows nothing of the object of the expedition ; he would certainly oppose it ; in case of ill-luck, I will pacify him.”

“ Madame,” said the marquis, after she had rejoined him and had mounted his horse *en croupe*, giving her own to the abbé, “ my friends in Paris write me to be very careful of what we do ; the Republic, they say, is preparing to fight us with spies and treachery.”

“ It wouldn’t be a bad plan,” she replied ; “ they have clever ideas, those fellows. I could take part in that sort of war and find foes.”

“ I don’t doubt it ! ” cried the marquis. “ Pichegru advises me to be cautious and watchful in my friend-

ships and relations of every kind. The Republic does me the honor to think me more dangerous than all the Vendéans put together, and counts on certain of my weaknesses to lay hands upon me."

"Surely you will not distrust me?" she said, striking his heart with the hand by which she held to him.

"Are you a traitor, madame?" he said, bending towards her his forehead, which she kissed.

"In that case," said the abbé, referring to the news, "Fouché's police will be more dangerous for us than their battalions of recruits and counter-Chouans."

"Yes, true enough, father," replied the marquis.

"Ah! ah!" cried the lady. "Fouché means to send women against you, does he? I shall be ready for them," she added in a deeper tone of voice and after a slight pause.

At a distance of three or four gunshots from the plateau, now abandoned, a little scene was taking place which was not uncommon in those days on the high-roads. After leaving the little village of La Pèlerine, Pille-Miche and Marche-à-Terre again stopped the turgotine at a dip in the road. Coupiau got off his seat after making a faint resistance. The silent traveller, extracted from his hiding-place by the two Chouans, found himself on his knees in a furze bush.

"Who are you?" asked Marche-à-Terre in a threatening voice.

The traveller kept silence till Pille-Miche put the question again and enforced it with the butt end of his gun.

"I am Jacques Pinaud," he replied, with a glance at Coupiau; "a poor linen-draper."

Coupiou made a sign in the negative, not considering it an infraction of his promise to Saint Anne. The sign enlightened Pille-Miche, who took aim at the luckless traveller, while Marche-à-Terre laid before him categorically a terrible ultimatum.

"You are too fat to be poor. If you make me ask you your name again, here's my friend Pille-Miche, who will obtain the gratitude and good-will of your heirs in a second. Who are you?" he added, after a pause.

"I am d'Orgemont, of Fougères."

"Ah! ah!" cried the two Chouans.

"I did n't tell your name, Monsieur d'Orgemont," said Coupiou. "The Holy Virgin is my witness that I did my best to protect you."

"Inasmuch as you are Monsieur d'Orgemont, of Fougères," said Marche-à-Terre, with an air of ironical respect, "we shall let you go in peace. Only, as you are neither a good Chouan nor a true Blue (though it was you who bought the property of the Abbey de Juvigny), you will pay us three hundred crowns of six francs each for your ransom. Neutrality is worth that, at least."

"Three hundred crowns of six francs each!" chorussed the luckless banker, Pille-Miche, and Coupiou, in three different tones.

"Alas, my good friend," continued d'Orgemont, "I'm a ruined man. The last forced loan of that devilish Republic for a hundred millions sucked me dry, taxed as I was already."

"How much did your Republic get out of you?"

"A thousand crowns, my dear man," replied the banker, with a piteous air, hoping for a reduction.

"If your Republic gets forced loans out of you for such big sums as that you must see that you would do better with us; our government would cost you less. Three hundred crowns, do you call that dear for your skin?"

"Where am I to get them?"

"Out of your strong-box," said Pille-Miche; "and mind that the money is forthcoming, or we'll singe you still."

"How am I to pay it to you?" asked d'Orgemont.

"Your country-house at Fougères is not far from Gibarry's farm where my cousin Galope-Chopine, otherwise called Cibot, lives. You can pay the money to him," said Pille-Miche.

"That's not business-like," said d'Orgemont.

"What do we care for that?" said Marche-à-Terre. "But mind you remember that if that money is not paid to Galope-Chopine within two weeks we shall pay you a little visit which will cure your gout. As for you, Coupiau," added Marche-à-Terre, "your name in future is to be Mène-à-Bien."

So saying, the two Chouans departed. The traveller returned to the vehicle, which, thanks to Coupiau's whip, now made rapid progress to Fougères.

"If you'd only been armed," said Coupiau, "we might have made some defence."

"Idiot!" cried d'Orgemont, pointing to his heavy shoes. "I have ten thousand francs in those soles; do you think I would be such a fool as to fight with that sum about me?"

Mène-à-Bien scratched his ear and looked behind him, but his new comrades were out of sight.

Hulot and his command stopped at Ernée long

enough to place the wounded in the hospital of the little town, and then, without further hindrance, they reached Mayenne. There the commandant cleared up his doubts as to the action of the Chouans, for on the following day the news of the pillage of the turgotine was received.

A few days later the government despatched to Mayenne so strong a force of "patriot conscripts," that Hulot was able to fill the ranks of his brigade. Disquieting rumors began to circulate about the insurrection. A rising had taken place at all the points where, during the late war, the Chouans and Bretons had made their chief centres of insurrection. The little town of Saint-James, between Pontorsón and Fougères, was occupied by them, apparently for the purpose of making it for the time being a headquarters of operations and supplies. From there they were able to communicate with Normandy and the Morbihan without risk. Their subaltern leaders roamed the three provinces, roused all the partisans of monarchy, and gave consistence and unity to their plans. These proceedings coincided with what was going on in La Vendée, where the same intrigues, under the influence of four famous leaders (the Abbé Vernal, the Comte de Fontaine, De Châtillon, and Suzannet), were agitating the country. The Chevalier de Valois, the Marquis d'Esgrignon, and the Troisvilles were, it was said, corresponding with these leaders in the department of the Orne. The chief of the great plan of operations which was thus developing slowly but in formidable proportions was really "the Gars," — a name given by the Chouans to the Marquis de Montauran on his arrival from England. The information sent to Hulot by the

War department proved correct in all particulars. The marquis gained after a time sufficient ascendancy over the Chouans to make them understand the true object of the war, and to persuade them that the excesses of which they were guilty brought disgrace upon the cause they had adopted. The daring nature, the nerve, coolness, and capacity of this young nobleman awakened the hopes of all the enemies of the Republic, and suited so thoroughly the grave and even solemn enthusiasm of those regions that even the least zealous partisans of the king did their part in preparing a decisive blow in behalf of the defeated monarchy.

Hulot received no answer to the questions and the frequent reports which he addressed to the government in Paris.

But the news of the almost magical return of General Bonaparte and the events of the 18th Brumaire were soon current in the air. The military commanders of the West understood then the silence of the ministers. Nevertheless, they were only the more impatient to be released from the responsibility that weighed upon them; and they were in every way desirous of knowing what measures the new government was likely to take. When it was known to these soldiers that General Bonaparte was appointed First Consul of the Republic their joy was great; they saw, for the first time, one of their own profession called to the management of the nation. France, which had made an idol of this young hero, quivered with hope. The vigor and energy of the nation revived. Paris, weary of its long gloom, gave itself up to fêtes and pleasures of which it had been so long deprived. The first acts of the Consulate did not diminish any hopes, and Liberty felt no alarm.

The First Consul issued a proclamation to the inhabitants of the West. The eloquent allocutions addressed to the masses which Bonaparte had, as it were, invented, produced effects in those days of patriotism and miracle that were absolutely startling. His voice echoed through the world like the voice of a prophet, for none of his proclamations had, as yet, been belied by defeat.

INHABITANTS :

An impious war again inflames the West.

The makers of these troubles are traitors sold to the English, or brigands who seek in civil war opportunity and license for misdeeds.

To such men the government owes no forbearance, nor any declaration of its principles.

But there are citizens, dear to France, who have been misled by their wiles. It is to such that truth and light are due.

Unjust laws have been promulgated and executed ; arbitrary acts have threatened the safety of citizens and the liberty of consciences ; mistaken entries on the list of *émigrés* imperil citizens ; the great principles of social order have been violated.

The Consuls declare that liberty of worship having been guaranteed by the Constitution, the law of 11 Prairial, year III., which gives the use of edifices built for religious worship to all citizens, shall be executed.

The government will pardon ; it will be merciful to repentance ; its mercy will be complete and absolute ; but it will punish whosoever, after this declaration, shall dare to resist the national sovereignty.

"Well," said Hulot, after the public reading of this Consular manifesto, "Isn't that paternal enough? But you'll see that not a single royalist brigand will be changed by it."

The commandant was right. The proclamation merely served to strengthen each side in their own convictions. A few days later Hulot and his colleagues received reinforcements. The new minister of war notified them that General Brune was appointed to command the troops in the west of France. Hulot, whose experience was known to the government, had provisional control in the departments of the Orne and Mayenne. An unusual activity began to show itself in the government offices. Circulars from the minister of war and the minister of police gave notice that vigorous measures entrusted to the military commanders would be taken to stifle the insurrection at its birth. But the Chouans and the Vendéans had profited by the inaction of the Directory to rouse the whole region and virtually take possession of it. A new Consular proclamation was therefore issued. This time, it was the general speaking to his troops:—

SOLDIERS :

There are none but brigands, *émigrés*, and hirelings of England now remaining in the West.

The army is composed of more than fifty thousand brave men. Let me speedily hear from them that the rebel chiefs have ceased to live. Glory is won by toil alone; if it could be had by living in barracks in a town, all would have it.

Soldiers, whatever be the rank you hold in the army, the gratitude of the nation awaits you. To be worthy

of it, you must brave the inclemencies of weather, ice, snow, and the excessive coldness of the nights; you must surprise your enemies at daybreak, and exterminate those wretches, the disgrace of France.

Make a short and sure campaign; be inexorable to those brigands, and maintain strict discipline.

National Guards, join the strength of your arms to that of the line.

If you know among you any men who fraternize with the brigands, arrest them. Let them find no refuge; pursue them; if traitors dare to harbor and defend them, let them perish together.

“What a man!” cried Hulot. “It is just as it was in the army of Italy—he rings in the mass, and he says it himself. Don’t you call that talking, hey?”

“Yes, but he speaks by himself and in his own name,” said Gérard, who began to feel alarmed at the possible results of the 18th Brumaire.

“And where’s the harm, since he’s a soldier?” said Merle.

A group of soldiers were clustered at a little distance before the same proclamation posted on a wall. As none of them could read, they gazed at it, some with a careless eye, others with curiosity, while two or three hunted about for a citizen who looked learned enough to read it to them.

“Now you tell us, Clef-des-Cœurs, what that rag of a paper says,” cried Beau-Pied, in a saucy tone to his comrade.

“Easy to guess,” replied Clef-des-Cœurs.

At these words the other men clustered round the pair, who were always ready to play their parts.

"Look there," continued Clef-des-Cœurs, pointing to a coarse woodcut which headed the proclamation and represented a pair of compasses, — which had lately superseded the level of 1793. "It means that the troops — that's us — are to march firm; don't you see the compasses are open, both legs apart? — that's an emblem."

"So much for your learning, my lad; it isn't an emblem — it's called a problem. I've served in the artillery," continued Beau-Pied, "and problems were meat and drink to my officers."

"I say it's an emblem."

"It's a problem"

"What will you bet?"

"Anything."

"Your German pipe?"

"Done!"

"By your leave, adjutant, is n't that thing an emblem, and not a problem?" said Clef-des-Cœurs, following Gérard, who was thoughtfully walking away.

"It is both," he replied, gravely.

"The adjutant was making fun of you," said Beau-Pied. "That paper means that our general in Italy is promoted Consul, which is a fine grade, and we are to get shoes and overcoats."

II.

ONE OF FOUCHÉ'S IDEAS.

ONE morning towards the end of Brumaire just as Hulot was exercising his brigade, now by order of his superiors wholly concentrated at Mayenne, a courier arrived from Alençon with despatches, at the reading of which his face betrayed extreme annoyance.

"Forward, then!" he cried in an angry tone, sticking the papers into the crown of his hat. "Two companies will march with me towards Mortagne. The Chouans are there. You will accompany me," he said to Merle and Gérard. "May I be created a nobleman if I can understand one word of that despatch. Perhaps I'm a fool! well, anyhow, forward, march! there's no time to lose."

"Commandant, by your leave," said Merle, kicking the cover of the ministerial despatch with the toe of his boot, "what is there so exasperating in that?"

"God's thunder! nothing at all — except that we are fooled."

When the commandant gave vent to this military oath (an object it must be said of Republican atheistical remonstrance) it gave warning of a storm; the diverse intonations of the words were degrees of a thermometer by which the brigade could judge of the patience of its commander; the old soldier's frankness of nature had

made this knowledge so easy that the veriest little drummer-boy knew his Hulot by heart, simply by observing the variations of the grimace with which the commander screwed up his cheek and snapped his eyes and vented his oath. On this occasion the tone of smothered rage with which he uttered the words made his two friends silent and circumspect. Even the pits of the small-pox which dented that veteran face seemed deeper, and the skin itself browner than usual. His broad queue, braided at the edges, had fallen upon one of his epaulettes as he replaced his three-cornered hat, and he flung it back with such fury that the ends became untied. However, as he stood stock-still, his hands clenched, his arms crossed tightly over his breast, his mustache bristling, Gérard ventured to ask him presently: "Are we to start at once?"

"Yes, if the men have ammunition."

"They have."

"Shoulder arms! Left wheel, forward, march!" cried Gérard, at a sign from the commandant.

The drum-corps marched at the head of the two companies designated by Gérard. At the first roll of the drums the commandant, who still stood plunged in thought, seemed to rouse himself, and he left the town accompanied by his two officers, to whom he said not a word. Merle and Gérard looked at each other silently as if to ask, "How long is he going to keep us in suspense?" and, as they marched, they cautiously kept an observing eye on their leader, who continued to vent rambling words between his teeth. Several times these vague phrases sounded like oaths in the ears of his soldiers, but not one of them dared to utter a word; for they all, when occasion demanded, maintained the stern

discipline to which the veterans who had served under Bonaparte in Italy were accustomed. The greater part of them had belonged, like Hulot, to the famous battalions which capitulated at Mayenne under a promise not to serve again on the frontier, and the army called them "Les Mayençais." It would be difficult to find leaders and men who more thoroughly understood each other.

At dawn of the day after their departure Hulot and his troop were on the high-road to Alençon, about three miles from that town towards Mortagne, at a part of the road which leads through pastures watered by the Sarthe. A picturesque vista of these meadows lay to the left, while the woodlands on the right which flank the road and join the great forest of Menil-Broust, serve as a foil to the delightful aspect of the river-scenery. The narrow causeway is bordered on each side by ditches the soil of which, being constantly thrown out upon the fields, has formed high banks covered with furze, — the name given throughout the West to the prickly gorse. This shrub, which spreads itself in thorny masses, makes excellent fodder in winter for horses and cattle; but as long as it was not cut the Chouans hid themselves behind its breastwork of dull green. These banks bristling with gorse, signifying to travelers their approach to Brittany, made this part of the road at the period of which we write as dangerous as it was beautiful; it was these dangers which compelled the hasty departure of Hulot and his soldiers, and it was here that he at last let out the secret of his wrath.

He was now on his return, escorting an old mail-coach drawn by post-horses, which the weariness of his soldiers, after their forced march, was compelling to ad-

vance at a snail's pace. The company of Blues from the garrison at Mortagne, who had escorted the rickety vehicle to the limits of their district, where Hulot and his men had met them, could be seen in the distance, on their way back to their quarters, like so many black specks. One of Hulot's companies was in the rear, the other in advance of the carriage. The commandant, who was marching with Merle and Gérard between the advance guard and the carriage, suddenly growled out: "Ten thousand thunders! would you believe that the general detached us from Mayenne to escort two petticoats?"

"But, commandant," remarked Gérard, "when we came up just now and took charge I observed that you bowed to them not ungraciously."

"Ha! that's the infamy of it. Those dandies in Paris ordered the greatest attention paid to their damned females. How dare they dishonor good and brave patriots by trailing us after petticoats? As for me, I march straight, and I don't choose to have to do with other people's zigzags. When I saw Danton taking mistresses, and Barras too, I said to them: 'Citizens, when the Republic called you to govern, it was not that you might authorize the vices of the old régime.' You may tell me that women — oh yes! we must have women, that's all right. Good soldiers of course must have women, and good women; but in times of danger, no! Besides, where would be the good of sweeping away the old abuses if patriots bring them back again? Look at the First Consul, there's a man! no women for him; always about his business. I'd bet my left mustache that he does n't know the fool's errand we've been sent on!"

“But, commandant,” said Merle, laughing, “I have seen the tip-end of the nose of the young lady, and I’ll declare the whole world needn’t be ashamed to feel an itch, as I do, to revolve round that carriage and get up a bit of a conversation.”

“Look out, Merle,” said Gérard; “the veiled beauties have a man accompanying them who seems wily enough to catch you in a trap.”

“Who? that *incroyable* whose little eyes are ferreting from one side of the road to the other, as if he saw Chouans? The fellow seems to have no legs; the moment his horse is hidden by the carriage, he looks like a duck with its head sticking out of a pâté. If that booby can hinder me from kissing the pretty linnet — ”

“‘Duck’! ‘linnet’! oh, my poor Merle, you have taken wings indeed! But don’t trust the duck. His green eyes are as treacherous as the eyes of a snake, and as sly as those of a woman who forgives her husband. I distrust the Chouans much less than I do those lawyers whose faces are like bottles of lemonade.”

“Pooh!” cried Merle, gayly. “I’ll risk it — with the commandant’s permission. That woman has eyes like stars, and it’s worth playing any stakes to see them.”

“Caught, poor fellow!” said Gérard to the commandant; “he is beginning to talk nonsense!”

Hulot made a face, shrugged his shoulders, and said: “Before he swallows the soup, I advise him to smell it.”

“Bravo, Merle,” said Gérard, judging by his friend’s lagging step that he meant to let the carriage overtake him. “Isn’t he a happy fellow? He is the only man

I know who can laugh over the death of a comrade without being thought unfeeling."

"He's the true French soldier," said Hulot, in a grave tone.

"Just look at him pulling his epaulets back to his shoulders, to show he is a captain," cried Gérard, laughing, — "as if his rank mattered!"

The coach toward which the officer was pivoting did, in fact, contain two women, one of whom seemed to be the servant of the other.

"Such women always run in couples," said Hulot.

A lean and sharp-looking little man ambled his horse sometimes before, sometimes behind the carriage; but, though he was evidently accompanying these privileged women, no one had yet seen him speak to them. This silence, a proof of either respect or contempt, as the case might be; the quantity of baggage belonging to the lady, whom the commandant sneeringly called "the princess;" everything, even to the clothes of her attendant squire, stirred Hulot's bile. The dress of the unknown man was a good specimen of the fashions of the day then being caricatured as "incroyable," — unbelievable, unless seen. Imagine a person trussed up in a coat, the front of which was so short that five or six inches of the waistcoat came below it, while the skirts were so long that they hung down behind like the tail of a cod, — the term then used to describe them. An enormous cravat was wound about his neck in so many folds that the little head which protruded from that muslin labyrinth certainly did justify Captain Merle's comparison. The stranger also wore tight-fitting trousers and Suwaroff boots. A huge blue-and-white cameo pinned his shirt; two watch-chains hung from his belt;

his hair, worn in ringlets on each side his face, concealed nearly the whole forehead; and, for a last adornment, the collar of his shirt and that of his coat came so high that his head seemed enveloped like a bunch of flowers in a horn of paper. Add to these queer accessories, which were combined in utter want of harmony, the burlesque contradictions in color of yellow trousers, scarlet waistcoat, cinnamon coat, and a correct idea will be gained of the supreme good taste which all dandies blindly obeyed in the first years of the Consulate. This costume, utterly uncouth, seemed to have been invented as a final test of grace, and to show that there was nothing too ridiculous for fashion to consecrate. The rider seemed to be about thirty years old, but he was really twenty-two; perhaps he owed this appearance of age to debauchery, possibly to the perils of the period. In spite of his preposterous dress, he had a certain elegance of manner which proved him to be a man of some breeding.

When the captain had dropped back close to the carriage, the dandy seemed to fathom his design, and favored it by checking his horse. Merle, who had flung him a sardonic glance, encountered one of those impenetrable faces, trained by the vicissitudes of the Revolution to hide all, even the most insignificant, emotion. The moment the curved end of the old triangular hat and the captain's epaulets were seen by the occupants of the carriage, a voice of angelic sweetness said: "Monsieur l'officier, will you have the kindness to tell us at what part of the road we now are?"

There is some inexpressible charm in the question of an unknown traveller, if a woman, — a world of adventure is in every word; but if the woman asks for

assistance or information, proving her weakness or ignorance of certain things, every man is inclined to construct some impossible tale which shall lead to his happiness. The words, "Monsieur l'officier," and the polite tone of the question stirred the captain's heart in a manner hitherto unknown to him. He tried to examine the lady, but was cruelly disappointed, for a jealous veil concealed her features; he could barely see her eyes, which shone through the gauze like onyx gleaming in the sunshine.

"You are now three miles from Alençon, madame," he replied.

"Alençon! already!" and the lady threw herself, or, rather, she gently leaned back in the carriage, and said no more.

"Alençon?" said the other woman, apparently waking up; "then you'll see it again."

She caught sight of the captain and was silent. Merle, disappointed in his hope of seeing the face of the beautiful incognita, began to examine that of her companion. She was a girl about twenty six years of age, fair, with a pretty figure and the sort of complexion, fresh and white and well-fed, which characterizes the women of Valognes, Bayeux, and the environs of Alençon. Her blue eyes showed no great intelligence, but a certain firmness mingled with tender feeling. She wore a gown of some common woollen stuff. The fashion of her hair, done up closely under a Norman cap, without any pretension, gave a charming simplicity to her face. Her attitude, without, of course, having any of the conventional nobility of society, was not without the natural dignity of a modest young girl, who can look back upon her past life without a single cause for

repentance. Merle knew her at a glance for one of those wild flowers which are sometimes taken from their native fields to Parisian hot-houses, where so many blasting rays are concentrated, without ever losing the purity of their color or their rustic simplicity. The naïve attitude of the girl and her modest glance showed Merle very plainly that she did not wish a listener. In fact, no sooner had he withdrawn than the two women began a conversation in so low a tone that only a murmur of it reached his ear.

"You came away in such a hurry," said the country-girl, "that you hardly took time to dress. A pretty-looking sight you are now! If we are going beyond Alençon you must really make your toilet."

"Oh! oh! Francine!" cried the lady.

"What is it?"

"This is the third time you have tried to make me tell you the reasons for this journey and where we are going."

"Have I said one single word which deserves that reproach?"

"Oh, I've noticed your manœuvring. Simple and truthful as you are, you have learned a little cunning from me. You are beginning to hold questioning in horror; and right enough, too, for of all the known ways of getting at a secret, questions are, to my mind, the silliest."

"Well," said Francine, "since nothing escapes you, you must admit, Marie, that your conduct would excite the curiosity of a saint. Yesterday without a penny, to-day your hands are full of gold; at Mortagne they give you the mail-coach which was pillaged and the driver killed, with government troops to protect you,

and you are followed by a man whom I regard as your evil genius."

"Who? Corentin?" said the young lady, accenting the words by two inflections of her voice expressive of contempt, a sentiment which appeared in the gesture with which she waved her hand towards the rider.

"Listen, Francine," she said. "Do you remember Patriot, the monkey I taught to imitate Danton?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"Well, were you afraid of him?"

"He was chained."

"And Corentin is muzzled, my dear."

"We used to play with Patriot by the hour," said Francine, — "I know that; but he always ended by serving us some bad trick." So saying, Francine threw herself hastily back close to her mistress, whose hands she caught and kissed in a coaxing way; saying in a tone of deep affection: "You know what I mean, Marie, but you will not answer me. How can you, after all that sadness which did so grieve me — oh, indeed it grieved me! — how can you, in twenty-four hours, change about and become so gay? you, who talked of suicide! Why have you changed? I have a right to ask these questions of your soul — it is mine, my claim to it is before that of others, for you will never be better loved than you are by me. Speak, mademoiselle."

"Why, Francine, don't you see all around you the secret of my good spirits? Look at the yellowing tufts of those distant tree-tops; not one is like another. As we look at them from this distance don't they seem like an old bit of tapestry? See the hedges from behind which the Chouans may spring upon us at any moment. When I look at that gorse I fancy I can see the muzzles

of their guns. Every time the road is shady under the trees I fancy I shall hear firing, and then my heart beats and a new sensation comes over me. It is neither the shuddering of fear nor an emotion of pleasure ; no, it is better than either, it is the stirring of everything within me — it is life ! Why should n't I be gay when a little excitement is dropped into my monotonous existence ? ”

“ Ah ! you are telling me nothing, cruel girl ! Holy Virgin ! ” added Francine, raising her eyes in distress to heaven ; “ to whom will she confess herself if she denies the truth to me ? ”

“ Francine,” said the lady, in a grave tone, “ I can't explain to you my present enterprise ; it is horrible.”

“ Why do wrong when you know it to be wrong ? ”

“ How can I help it ? I catch myself thinking as if I were fifty, and acting as if I were still fifteen. You have always been my better self, my poor Francine, but in this affair I must stifle conscience. And,” she added after a pause, with a deep sigh, “ I cannot. Therefore, how can you expect me to take a confessor as stern as you ? ” and she patted the girl's hand.

“ When did I ever blame your actions ? ” cried Francine. “ Evil is so mixed with good in your nature. Yes, Saint Anne of Auray, to whom I pray to save you, will absolve you for all you do. And, Marie, am I not here beside you, without so much as knowing where you go ? ” and she kissed her hands with effusion.

“ But,” replied Marie, “ you may yet desert me, if your conscience — ”

“ Hush, hush, mademoiselle,” cried Francine, with a hurt expression. “ But surely you will tell me — ”

“Nothing!” said the young lady, in a resolute voice. “Only — and I wish you to know it — I hate this enterprise even more than I hate him whose gilded tongue induced me to undertake it. I will be frank and own to you that I would never have yielded to their wishes if I had not foreseen, in this ignoble farce, a mingling of love and danger which tempted me. I cannot bear to leave this empty world without at least attempting to gather the flowers that it owes me, — whether I perish in the attempt or not. But remember, for the honor of my memory, that had I ever been a happy woman, the sight of their great knife, ready to fall upon my neck, would not have driven me to accept a part in this tragedy — for it is a tragedy. But now,” she said, with a gesture of disgust, “if it were countermanded, I should instantly fling myself into the Sarthe. It would not be destroying life, for I have never lived.”

“Oh, Saint Anne of Auray, forgive her!”

“What are you so afraid of? You know very well that the dull round of domestic life gives no opportunity for my passions. That would be bad in most women, I admit; but my soul is made of a higher sensibility and can bear great tests. I might have been, perhaps, a gentle being like you. Why, why have I risen above or sunk beneath the level of my sex? Ah! the wife of Bonaparte is a happy woman! Yes, I shall die young, for I am gay, as you say, — gay at this pleasure-party, where there is blood to drink, as that poor Danton used to say. There, there, forget what I am saying; it is the woman of fifty who speaks. Thank God! the girl of fifteen is still within me.”

The young country-girl shuddered. She alone knew

the fiery, impetuous nature of her mistress. She alone was initiated into the mysteries of a soul rich with enthusiasm, into the secret emotions of a being who, up to this time, had seen life pass her like a shadow she could not grasp, eager as she was to do so. After sowing broadcast with full hands and harvesting nothing, this woman was still virgin in soul, but irritated by a multitude of baffled desires. Weary of a struggle without an adversary, she had reached in her despair to the point of preferring good to evil, if it came in the form of enjoyment; evil to good, if it offered her some poetic emotion; misery to mediocrity, as something nobler and higher; the gloomy and mysterious future of present death to a life without hopes or even without sufferings. Never in any heart was so much powder heaped ready for the spark, never were so many riches for love to feed on; no daughter of Eve was ever moulded, with a greater mixture of gold in her clay. Francine, like an angel of earth, watched over this being whose perfections she adored, believing that she obeyed a celestial mandate in striving to bring that spirit back among the choir of seraphim whence it was banished for the sin of pride.

"There is the clock-tower of Alençon," said the horseman, riding up to the carriage.

"I see it," replied the young lady, in a cold tone.

"Ah, well," he said, turning away with all the signs of servile submission, in spite of his disappointment.

"Go faster," said the lady to the postilion. "There is no longer any danger; go at a fast trot, or even a gallop, if you can; we are almost into Alençon."

As the carriage passed the commandant, she called out to him, in a sweet voice: —

"We will meet at the inn, commandant. Come and see me."

"Yes, yes," growled the commandant. "'The inn '! 'Come and see me' ! Is that how you speak to an officer in command of the army?" and he shook his fist at the carriage, which was now rolling rapidly along the road.

"Don't be vexed, commandant, she has got your rank as general up her sleeve," said Corentin, laughing, as he endeavored to put his horse into a gallop to overtake the carriage.

"I sha'n't let myself be fooled by any such folks as they," said Hulot to his two friends, in a growling tone. "I'd rather throw my general's coat into that ditch than earn it out of a bed. What are these birds after? Have you any idea, either of you?"

"Yes," said Merle, "I've an idea that that's the handsomest woman I ever saw! I think you're reading the riddle all wrong. Perhaps she's the wife of the First Consul."

"Pooh! the First Consul's wife is old, and this woman is young," said Hulot. "Besides, the order I received from the minister gives her name as Mademoiselle de Verneuil. She is a *ci-devant*. Don't I know 'em? They all plied one trade before the Revolution, and any man could make himself a major, or a general in double-quick time; all he had to do was to say 'Dear heart' to them now and then."

While each soldier opened his compasses, as the commandant was wont to say, the miserable vehicle which was then used as the mail-coach drew up before the inn of the Trois Maures, in the middle of the main street of Alençon. The sound of the wheels brought the landlord to the door. No one in Alençon could

have expected the arrival of the mail-coach at the Trois Maures, for the murderous attack upon the coach at Mortagne was already known, and so many people followed it along the street that the two women, anxious to escape the curiosity of the crowd, ran quickly into the kitchen, which forms the inevitable antechamber to all Western inns. The landlord was about to follow them, after examining the coach, when the postilion caught him by the arm.

“Attention, citizen Brutus,” he said; “there’s an escort of the Blues behind us; but it is I who bring you these female citizens; they’ll pay like *ci-devant* princesses, therefore —”

“Therefore, we’ll drink a glass of wine together presently, my lad,” said the landlord.

After glancing about the kitchen, blackened with smoke, and noticing a table bloody from raw meat, Mademoiselle de Verneuil flew into the next room with the celerity of a bird; for she shuddered at the sight and smell of the place, and feared the inquisitive eyes of a dirty *chef*, and a fat little woman who examined her attentively.

“What are we to do, wife?” said the landlord. “Who the devil could have supposed we would have so many on our hands in these days? Before I serve her a decent breakfast that woman will get impatient. Stop, an idea! evidently she is a person of quality. I’ll propose to put her with the one we have upstairs. What do you think?”

When the landlord went to look for the new arrival he found only Francine, to whom he spoke in a low voice, taking her to the farther end of the kitchen, so as not to be overheard.

“If the ladies wish,” he said, “to be served in private, as I have no doubt they do, I have a very nice breakfast all ready for a lady and her son, and I dare say would n’t mind sharing it with you; they are persons of condition,” he added, mysteriously.

He had hardly said the words before he felt a tap on his back from the handle of a whip. He turned hastily and saw behind him a short, thick-set man, who had noiselessly entered from a side room, — an apparition which seemed to terrify the hostess, the cook, and the scullion. The landlord turned pale when he saw the intruder, who shook back the hair which concealed his forehead and eyes, raised himself on the points of his toes to reach the other’s ears, and said to him in a whisper: “You know the cost of an imprudence or a betrayal, and the color of the money we pay it in. We are generous in that coin.”

He added a gesture which was like a horrible commentary to his words. Though the rotundity of the landlord prevented Francine from seeing the stranger, who stood behind him, she caught certain words of his threatening speech, and was thunderstruck at hearing the hoarse tones of a Breton voice. She sprang towards the man, but he, seeming to move with the agility of a wild animal, had already darted through a side door which opened on the courtyard. Utterly amazed, she ran to the window. Through its panes, yellowed with smoke, she caught sight of the stranger as he was about to enter the stable. Before doing so, however, he turned a pair of black eyes to the upper story of the inn, and thence to the mail-coach in the yard, as if to call some friend’s attention to the vehicle. In spite of his muffling goatskin and thanks to this movement

which allowed her to see his face, Francine recognized the Chouan, Marche-à-Terre, with his heavy whip; she saw him, indistinctly, in the obscurity of the stable, fling himself down on a pile of straw, in a position which enabled him to keep an eye on all that happened at the inn. Marche-à-Terre curled himself up in such a way that the cleverest spy, at any distance far or near, might have taken him for one of those huge dogs that drag the hand-carts, lying asleep with his muzzle on his paws.

The behavior of the Chouan proved to Francine that he had not recognized her. Under the hazardous circumstances which she felt her mistress to be in, she scarcely knew whether to regret or to rejoice in this unconsciousness. But the mysterious connection between the landlord's offer (not uncommon among inn-keepers, who can thus kill two birds with one stone), and the Chouan's threats, piqued her curiosity. She left the dirty window from which she could see the formless heap which she knew to be Marche-à-Terre, and returned to the landlord, who was still standing in the attitude of a man who feels he has made a blunder, and does not know how to get out of it. The Chouan's gesture had petrified the poor fellow. No one in the West was ignorant of the cruel refinements of torture with which the "Chasseurs du Roi" punished those who were even suspected of indiscretion; the landlord felt their knives already at his throat. The cook looked with a shudder at the iron stove on which they often "warmed" ("chauffaient") the feet of those they suspected. The fat landlady held a knife in one hand and a half-peeled potato in the other, and gazed at her husband with a stupefied air. Even the scullion puzzled

himself to know the reason of their speechless terror. Francine's curiosity was naturally excited by this silent scene, the principal actor of which was visible to all, though departed. The girl was gratified at the evident power of the Chouan, and though by nature too simple and humble for the tricks of a lady's maid, she was also far too anxious to penetrate the mystery not to profit by her advantages on this occasion.

"Mademoiselle accepts your proposal," she said to the landlord, who jumped as if suddenly awakened by her words.

"What proposal?" he asked with genuine surprise.

"What proposal?" asked Corentin, entering the kitchen.

"What proposal?" asked Mademoiselle de Verneuil, returning to it.

"What proposal?" asked a fourth individual on the lower step of the staircase, who now sprang lightly into the kitchen.

"Why the breakfast with your persons of distinction," replied Francine, impatiently.

"Distinction!" said the ringing and ironical voice of the person who had just come down the stairway. "My good fellow, that strikes me as a very poor inn joke; but if it's the company of this young female citizen that you want to give us, we should be fools to refuse it. In my mother's absence, I accept," he added, striking the astonished inn-keeper on the shoulder.

The charming heedlessness of youth disguised the haughty insolence of the words, which drew the attention of every one present to the new-comer. The landlord at once assumed the countenance of Pilate washing his hands of the blood of that just man; he slid back

two steps to reach his wife's ear, and whispered, "You are witness, if any harm comes of it, that it is not my fault. But, anyhow," he added, in a voice that was lower still, "go and tell Monsieur Marche-à-Terre what has happened."

The traveller, who was a young man of medium height, wore a dark blue coat and high black gaiters coming above the knee and over the breeches, which were also of blue cloth. This simple uniform, without epaulets, was that of the pupils of the École Polytechnique. Beneath this plain attire Mademoiselle de Verneuil could distinguish at a glance the elegant shape and nameless *something* that tells of natural nobility. The face of the young man, which was rather ordinary at first sight, soon attracted the eye by the conformation of certain features which revealed a soul capable of great things. A bronzed skin, curly fair hair, sparkling blue eyes, a delicate nose, motions full of ease, all disclosed a life guided by noble sentiments and trained to the habit of command. But the most characteristic signs of his nature were in the chin, which was dented like that of Bonaparte, and in the lower lip, which joined the upper one with a graceful curve, like that of an acanthus leaf on the capital of a Corinthian column. Nature had given to these two features of his face an irresistible charm.

"This young man has singular distinction if he is really a republican," thought Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

To see all this at a glance, to brighten at the thought of pleasing, to bend her head softly and smile coquettishly and cast a soft look able to revive a heart that was dead to love, to veil her long black eyes with lids whose curving lashes made shadows on her cheeks, to

choose the melodious tones of her voice and give a penetrating charm to the formal words, "Monsieur, we are very much obliged to you," — all this charming by-play took less time than it has taken to describe it. After this, Mademoiselle de Verneuil, addressing the landlord, asked to be shown to a room, saw the staircase, and disappeared with Francine, leaving the stranger to discover whether her reply was intended as an acceptance or a refusal.

"Who is that woman?" asked the Polytechnique student, in an airy manner, of the landlord, who still stood motionless and bewildered.

"That's the female citizen Verneuil," replied Corentin, sharply, looking jealously at the questioner; "*a ci-devant*; what is she to you?"

The stranger, who was humming a revolutionary tune, turned his head haughtily towards Corentin. The two young men looked at each other for a moment like cocks about to fight, and the glance they exchanged gave birth to a hatred which lasted forever. The blue eye of the young soldier was as frank and honest as the green eye of the other man was false and malicious; the manners of the one had native grandeur, those of the other were insinuating; one was eager in his advance, the other deprecating; one commanded respect, the other sought it.

"Is the citizen du Gua Saint-Cyr here?" said a peasant, entering the kitchen at that moment.

"What do you want of him?" said the young man, coming forward.

The peasant made a low bow and gave him a letter, which the young cadet read and threw into the fire; then he nodded his head and the man withdrew.

"No doubt you've come from Paris, citizen?" said Corentin, approaching the stranger with a certain ease of manner, and a pliant, affable air which seemed intolerable to the citizen du Gua.

"Yes," he replied, shortly.

"I suppose you have been graduated into some grade of the artillery?"

"No, citizen, into the navy."

"Ah! then you are going to Brest?" said Corentin, interrogatively.

But the young sailor turned lightly on the heels of his shoes without deigning to reply, and presently disappointed all the expectations which Mademoiselle de Verneuil had based on the charm of his appearance. He applied himself to ordering his breakfast with the eagerness of a boy, questioned the cook and the landlady about their receipts, wondered at provincial customs like a Parisian just out of his shell, made as many objections as any fine lady, and showed the more lack of mind and character because his face and manners had seemed to promise them. Corentin smiled with pity when he saw the face he made on tasting the best cider of Normandy.

"Heu!" he cried; "how can you swallow such stuff as that? It is meat and drink both. I don't wonder the Republic distrusts a province where they knock their harvest from trees with poles, and shoot travellers from the ditches. Pray don't put such medicine as that on the table; give us some good Bordeaux, white and red. And above all, do see if there is a good fire upstairs. These country-people are so backward in civilization!" he added. "Alas!" sighing, "there is but one Paris in the world; what a pity it is I can't transpot it to sea!

Heavens! spoil-sauce!" he suddenly cried out to the cook; "what makes you put vinegar in that fricassee when you have lemons? And, madame," he added, "you gave me such coarse sheets I couldn't close my eyes all night." Then he began to twirl a huge cane, executing with a silly sort of care a variety of evolutions, the greater or less precision and agility of which were considered proofs of a young man's standing in the class of the Incroyables, so-called.

"And it is with such dandies as that," said Corentin to the landlord confidentially, watching his face, "that the Republic expects to improve her navy!"

"That man," said the young sailor to the landlady, in a low voice, "is a spy of Fouché's. He has 'police,' stamped on his face, and I'll swear that spot he has got on his chin is Paris mud. Well, set a thief to catch—"

Just then a lady to whom the young sailor turned with every sign of outward respect, entered the kitchen of the inn.

"My dear mamma," he said. "I am glad you've come. I have recruited some guests in your absence."

"Guests?" she replied; "what folly!"

"It is Mademoiselle de Verneuil," he said in a low voice.

"She perished on the scaffold after the affair of Savenay; she went to Mans to save her brother the Prince de Loudon," returned his mother, rather brusquely.

"You are mistaken, madame," said Corentin, gently, emphasizing the word "madame;" "there are two demoiselles de Verneuil; all great houses, as you know, have several branches."

The lady, surprised at this freedom, drew back a few steps to examine the speaker; she turned her black

eyes upon him, full of the keen sagacity so natural to women, seeking apparently to discover in what interest he stepped forth to explain Mademoiselle de Verneuil's birth. Corentin, on the other hand, who was studying the lady cautiously, denied her in his own mind the joys of motherhood and gave her those of love ; he refused the possession of a son of twenty to a woman whose dazzling skin, and arched eyebrows, and lashes still unblemished, were the objects of his admiration, and whose abundant black hair, parted on the forehead into simple bands, brought out the youthfulness of an intelligent head. The slight lines of the brow, far from indicating age, revealed young passions. Though the piercing eyes were somewhat veiled, it was either from the fatigue of travelling or the too frequent expression of excitement. Corentin remarked that she was wrapped in a mantle of English material, and that the shape of her hat, foreign no doubt, did not belong to any of the styles called Greek, which ruled the Parisian fashions of the period. Corentin was one of those beings who are compelled by the bent of their natures to suspect evil rather than good, and he instantly doubted the citizenship of the two travellers. The lady, who, on her side, had made her observations on the person of Corentin with equal rapidity, turned to her son with a significant look which may be faithfully translated into the words : " Who is this queer man ? Is he of our stripe ? "

To this mute inquiry the youth replied by an attitude and a gesture which said : " Faith ! I can't tell ; but I distrust him. Then, leaving his mother to fathom the mystery, he turned to the landlady and whispered : " Try to find out who that fellow is ; and whether he is really accompanying the young lady ; and why. "

"So," said Madame du Gua, looking at Corentin, "you are quite sure, citizen, that Mademoiselle de Verneuil is living?"

"She is living in flesh and blood as surely, *madame*, as the citizen du Gua Saint-Cyr."

This answer contained a sarcasm, the hidden meaning of which was known to none but the lady herself, and any one but herself would have been disconcerted by it. Her son looked fixedly at Corentin, who coolly pulled out his watch without appearing to notice the effect of his answer. The lady, uneasy and anxious to discover at once if the speech meant danger or was merely accidental, said to Corentin in a natural tone and manner: "How little security there is on these roads. We were attacked by Chouans just beyond Mortagne. My son came very near being killed; he received two balls in his hat while protecting me."

"Is it possible, *madame*? were you in the mail-coach which those brigands robbed in spite of the escort, — the one we have just come by? You must know the vehicle well. They told me at Mortagne that the Chouans numbered a couple of thousands and that every one in the coach was killed, even the travellers. That's how history is written! Alas! *madame*," he continued, "if they murder travellers so near to Paris you can fancy how unsafe the roads are in Brittany. I shall return to Paris and not risk myself any farther."

"Is Mademoiselle de Verneuil young and handsome?" said the lady to the hostess, struck suddenly with an idea.

Just then the landlord interrupted the conversation, in which there was something of an angry element, by announcing that breakfast was ready. The young

sailor offered his hand to his mother with an air of false familiarity that confirmed the suspicions of Corentin, to whom the youth remarked as he went up the stairway: "Citizen, if you are travelling with the female citizen de Verneuil, and she accepts the landlord's proposal, you can come too."

Though the words were said in a careless tone and were not inviting, Corentin followed. The young man squeezed the lady's hand when they were five or six steps above him, and said, in a low voice: "Now you see the dangers to which your imprudent enterprises, which have no glory in them, expose us. If we are discovered, how are we to escape? And what a contemptible rôle you force me to play!"

All three reached a large room on the upper floor. Any one who has travelled in the West will know that the landlord had, on such an occasion, brought forth his best things to do honor to his guests, and prepared the meal with no ordinary luxury. The table was carefully laid. The warmth of a large fire took the dampness from the room. The linen, glass, and china were not too dingy. Corentin saw at once that the landlord had, as they say familiarly, cut himself in quarters to please the strangers. "Consequently," thought he, "these people are not what they pretend to be. That young man is clever. I took him for a fool, but I begin to believe him as shrewd as myself."

The sailor, his mother, and Corentin awaited Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whom the landlord went to summon. But the handsome traveller did not come. The youth expected that she would make difficulties, and he left the room, humming the popular song, "Guard the nation's safety," and went to that of Mademoiselle de

Verneuil, prompted by a keen desire to get the better of her scruples and take her back with him. Perhaps he wanted to solve the doubts which filled his mind ; or else to exercise the power which all men like to think they wield over a pretty woman.

“ May I be hanged if he’s a Republican,” thought Corentin, as he saw him go. “ He moves his shoulders like a courtier. And if that’s his mother,” he added, mentally, looking at Madame du Gua, “ I’m the Pope ! They are Chouans ; and I’ll make sure of their quality.”

The door soon opened and the young man entered, holding the hand of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whom he led to the table with an air of self-conceit that was nevertheless courteous. The devil had not allowed that hour which had elapsed since the lady’s arrival to be wasted. With Francine’s assistance, Mademoiselle de Verneuil had armed herself with a travelling-dress more dangerous, perhaps, than any ball-room attire. Its simplicity had precisely that attraction which comes of the skill with which a woman, handsome enough to wear no ornaments, reduces her dress to the position of a secondary charm. She wore a green gown, elegantly cut, the jacket of which, braided and frogged, defined her figure in a manner that was hardly suitable for a young girl, allowing her supple waist and rounded bust and graceful motions to be fully seen. She entered the room smiling, with the natural amenity of women who can show a fine set of teeth, transparent as porcelain between rosy lips, and dimpling cheeks as fresh as those of childhood. Having removed the close hood which had almost concealed her head at her first meeting with the young sailor, she could now employ at her ease the various little artifices,

apparently so artless, with which a woman shows off the beauties of her face and the grace of her head, and attracts admiration for them. A certain harmony between her manners and her dress made her seem so much younger than she was that Madame du Gua thought herself beyond the mark in supposing her over twenty. The coquetry of her apparel, evidently worn to please, was enough to inspire hope in the young man's breast; but Mademoiselle de Verneuil bowed to him, as she took her place, with a slight inclination of her head and without looking at him, putting him aside with an apparently light-hearted carelessness which disconcerted him. This coolness might have seemed to an observer neither caution nor coquetry, but indifference, natural or feigned. The candid expression on the young lady's face only made it the more impenetrable. She showed no consciousness of her charms, and was apparently gifted with the pretty manners that win all hearts, and had already duped the natural self-conceit of the young sailor. Thus baffled, the youth returned to his own seat with a sort of vexation.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil took Francine, who accompanied her, by the hand and said, in a caressing voice, turning to Madame de Gua: "Madame, will you have the kindness to allow this young girl, who is more a friend than a servant to me, to sit with us? In these perilous times such devotion as hers can only be repaid by the heart; indeed, that is very nearly all that is left to us."

Madame du Gua replied to the last words, which were said half aside, with a rather unceremonious bow that betrayed her annoyance at the beauty of the new-comer. Then she said, in a low voice, to her son:

“‘Perilous times,’ ‘devotion,’ ‘madame,’ ‘servant’! that is not Mademoiselle de Verneuil; it is some girl sent here by Fouché.”

The guests were about to sit down when Mademoiselle de Verneuil noticed Corentin, who was still employed in a close scrutiny of the mother and son, who were showing some annoyance at his glances.

“Citizen,” she said to him, “you are no doubt too well bred to dog my steps. The Republic, when it sent my parents to the scaffold, did not magnanimously provide me with a guardian. Though you have, from extreme and chivalric gallantry accompanied me against my will to this place” (she sighed), “I am quite resolved not to allow your protecting care to become a burden to you. I am safe now, and you can leave me.”

She gave him a fixed and contemptuous look. Corentin understood her; he repressed the smile which almost curled the corners of his wily lips as he bowed to her respectfully.

“Citoyenne,” he said, “it is always an honor to obey you. Beauty is the only queen a Republican can serve.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s eyes, as she watched him depart, shone with such natural pleasure, she looked at Francine with a smile of intelligence which betrayed so much real satisfaction, that Madame du Gua, who grew prudent as she grew jealous, felt disposed to relinquish the suspicions which Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s great beauty had forced into her mind.

“It may be Mademoiselle de Verneuil, after all,” she whispered to her son.

“But that escort?” answered the young man, whose

vexation at the young lady's indifference allowed him to be cautious. "Is she a prisoner or an emissary, a friend or an enemy of the government?"

Madame du Gua made a sign as if to say that she would soon clear up the mystery.

However, the departure of Corentin seemed to lessen the young man's distrust, and he began to cast on Mademoiselle de Verneuil certain looks which betrayed an immoderate admiration for women, rather than the respectful warmth of a dawning passion. The young girl grew more and more reserved, and gave all her attentions to Madame du Gua. The youth, angry with himself, tried, in his vexation, to turn the tables and seem indifferent. Mademoiselle de Verneuil appeared not to notice this manœuvre; she continued to be simple without shyness and reserved without prudery.

This chance meeting of personages who, apparently, were not destined to become intimate, awakened no agreeable sympathy on either side. There was even a sort of vulgar embarrassment, an awkwardness which destroyed all the pleasure which Mademoiselle de Verneuil and the young sailor had begun by expecting. But women have such wonderful conventional tact, they are so intimately allied with each other, or they have such keen desires for emotion, that they always know how to break the ice on such occasions. Suddenly, as if the two beauties had the same thought, they began to tease their solitary knight in a playful way, and were soon vying with each other in the jesting attention which they paid to him; this unanimity of action left them free. At the end of half an hour, the two women, already secret enemies, were

apparently the best of friends. The young man then discovered that he felt as angry with Mademoiselle de Verneuil for her friendliness and freedom as he had been with her reserve. In fact, he was so annoyed by it that he regretted, with a sort of dumb anger, having allowed her to breakfast with them.

"Madame," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, "is your son always as gloomy as he is at this moment?"

"Mademoiselle," he replied, "I ask myself what is the good of a fleeting happiness. The secret of my gloom is the evanescence of my pleasure."

"That is a madrigal," she said, laughing, "which rings of the Court rather than the Polytechnique."

"My son only expressed a very 'natural thought, mademoiselle," said Madame du Gua, who had her own reasons for placating the stranger.

"Then laugh while you may," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, smiling at the young man. "How do you look when you have really something to weep for, if what you are pleased to call a happiness makes you so dismal?"

This smile, accompanied by a provoking glance which destroyed the consistency of her reserve, revived the youth's feelings. But inspired by her nature, which often impels a woman to do either too much or too little under such circumstances, Mademoiselle de Verneuil, having covered the young man with that brilliant look full of love's promises, immediately withdrew from his answering expression into a cold and severe modesty, — a conventional performance by which a woman sometimes hides a true emotion. In a moment, a single moment, when each expected to see the eyelids of the other lowered, they had communicated to one

another their real thoughts ; but they veiled their glances as quickly as they had mingled them in that one flash which convulsed their hearts and enlightened them. Confused at having said so many things in a single glance, they dared no longer look at each other. Mademoiselle de Verneuil withdrew into cold politeness, and seemed to be impatient for the conclusion of the meal.

“Mademoiselle, you must have suffered very much in prison?” said Madame du Gua.

“Alas, madame, I sometimes think that I am still there.”

“Is your escort sent to protect you, mademoiselle, or to watch you? Are you still suspected by the Republic?”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil felt instinctively that Madame du Gua had no real interest in her, and the question alarmed her.

“Madame,” she replied, “I really do not know myself the exact nature of my relations to the Republic.”

“Perhaps it fears you?” said the young man, rather satirically.

“We must respect her secrets,” interposed Madame du Gua.

“Oh, madame, the secrets of a young girl who knows nothing of life but its misfortunes are not interesting.”

“But,” answered Madame du Gua, wishing to continue a conversation which might reveal to her all that she wanted to know, “the First Consul seems to have excellent intentions. They say that he is going to remove the disabilities of the *émigrés*.”

“That is true, madame,” she replied, with rather too

much eagerness, "and if so, why do we rouse Brittany and La Vendée? Why bring civil war into France?"

This eager cry, in which she seemed to share her own reproach, made the young sailor quiver. He looked earnestly at her, but was unable to detect either hatred or love upon her face. Her beautiful skin, the delicacy of which was shown by the color beneath it, was impenetrable. A sudden and invincible curiosity attracted him to this strange creature, to whom he was already drawn by violent desires.

"Madame," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, after a pause, "may I ask if you are going to Mayenne?"

"Yes, mademoiselle," replied the young man with a questioning look.

"Then, madame," she continued, "as your son serves the Republic" (she said the words with an apparently indifferent air, but she gave her companions one of those furtive glances the art of which belongs to women and diplomatists), "you must fear the Chouans, and an escort is not to be despised. We are now almost travelling companions, and I hope you will come with me to Mayenne."

Mother and son hesitated, and seemed to consult each other's faces.

"I am not sure, mademoiselle," said the young man, "that it is prudent in me to tell you that interests of the highest importance require our presence to-night in the neighborhood of Fougères, and we have not yet been able to find a means of conveyance; but women are so naturally generous that I am ashamed not to confide in you. Nevertheless," he added, "before putting ourselves in your hands, I ought to know whether we shall be able to get out of them safe and sound. In short,

mademoiselle, are you the sovereign or the slave of your Republican escort? Pardon my frankness, but your position does not seem to me exactly natural — ”

“ We live in times, monsieur, when nothing takes place naturally. You can accept my proposal without anxiety. Above all,” she added, emphasizing her words, “ you need fear no treachery in an offer made by a woman who has no part in political hatreds.”

“ A journey thus made is not without danger,” he said, with a look which gave significance to that commonplace remark.

“ What is it you fear?” she answered, smiling sarcastically. “ I see no peril for any one.”

“ Is this the woman who a moment ago shared my desires in her eyes?” thought the young man. “ What a tone in her voice! she is laying a trap for me.”

At that instant the shrill cry of an owl which appeared to have perched on the chimney top vibrated in the air like a warning.

“ What does that mean?” said Mademoiselle de Verneuil. “ Our journey together will not begin under favorable auspices. Do owls in these parts screech by daylight?” she added, with a surprised gesture.

“ Sometimes,” said the young man, coolly. “ Mademoiselle,” he continued, “ we may bring you ill-luck; you are thinking of that, I am sure. We had better not travel together.”

These words were said with a calmness and reserve which puzzled Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

“ Monsieur,” she replied, with truly aristocratic insolence, “ I am far from wishing to compel you. Pray let us keep the little liberty the Republic leaves us. If Madame were alone, I should insist — ”

The heavy step of a soldier was heard in the passage, and the Commandant Hulot presently appeared in the doorway with a frowning brow.

"Come here, colonel," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, smiling and pointing to a chair beside her. "Let us talk over the affairs of State. But what is the matter with you? Are there Chouans here?"

The commandant stood speechless on catching sight of the young man, at whom he looked with peculiar attention.

"Mamma, will you take some more hare? Mademoiselle, you are not eating," said the sailor to Francine, seeming busy with the guests.

But Hulot's astonishment and Mademoiselle de Verneuil's close observation had something too dangerously serious about them to be ignored.

"What is it, citizen?" said the young man, abruptly; "do you know me?"

"Perhaps I do," replied the Republican.

"You are right; I remember you at the School."

"I never went to any school," said the soldier, roughly. "What school do you mean?"

"The Polytechnique."

"Ha, ha, those barracks where they expect to make soldiers in dormitories," said the veteran, whose aversion for officers trained in that nursery was insurmountable. "To what arm do you belong?"

"I am in the navy."

"Ha!" cried Hulot, smiling vindictively, "how many of your fellow-students are in the navy? Don't you know," he added in a serious tone, "that none but the artillery and the engineers graduate from there?"

The young man was not disconcerted.

"An exception was made in my favor, on account of the name I bear," he answered. "We are all naval men in our family."

"What is the name of your family, citizen?" asked Hulot.

"Du Gua Saint-Cyr."

"Then you were not killed at Mortagne?"

"He came very near being killed," said Madame du Gua, quickly; "my son received two balls in —"

"Where are your papers?" asked Hulot, not listening to the mother.

"Do you propose to read them?" said the young man, cavalierly; his blue eye, keen with suspicion, studied alternately the gloomy face of the commandant and that of Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

"A stripling like you to pretend to fool me! Come, produce your papers, or —"

"La! la! citizen, I'm not such a babe as I look to be. Why should I answer you? Who are you?"

"The commander of this department," replied Hulot.

"Oh, then, of course, the matter is serious; I am taken with arms in my hand," and he held out a glass full of Bordeaux to the soldier.

"I am not thirsty," said Hulot. "Come, your papers."

At that instant the rattle of arms and the tread of men was heard in the street. Hulot walked to the window and gave a satisfied look which made Mademoiselle de Verneuil tremble. That sign of interest on her part seemed to fire the young man, whose face had grown cold and haughty. After feeling in the pockets of his coat he drew forth an elegant portfolio and presented certain papers to the commandant, which the

latter read slowly, comparing the description given in the passport with the face and figure of the young man before him. During this prolonged examination the owl's cry rose again; but this time there was no difficulty whatever in recognizing a human voice. The commandant at once returned the papers to the young man, with a scoffing look.

"That's all very fine," he said; "but I don't like the music. You will come with me to headquarters."

"Why do you take him there?" asked Mademoiselle de Verneuil, in a tone of some excitement.

"My good lady," replied the commandant, with his usual grimace, "that's none of your business."

Irritated by the tone and words of the old soldier, but still more at the sort of humiliation offered to her in presence of a man who was under the influence of her charms, Mademoiselle de Verneuil rose, abandoning the simple and modest manner she had hitherto adopted; her cheeks glowed and her eyes shone as she said in a quiet tone but with a trembling voice: "Tell me, has this young man met all the requirements of the law?"

"Yes — apparently," said Hulot ironically.

"Then, I desire that you will leave him, *apparently*, alone," she said. "Are you afraid he will escape you? You are to escort him with me to Mayenne; he will be in the coach with his mother. Make no objection; it is my will — Well, what?" she added, noticing Hulot's grimace; "do you suspect him still?"

"Rather."

"What do you want to do with him?"

"Oh, nothing; balance his head with a little lead perhaps. He's a giddy-pate!" said the commandant, ironically.

“‘*Read that,*’ she said, *with a sarcastic laugh.*”



G. Bourgain

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"Are you joking, colonel?" cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

"Come!" said the commandant, nodding to the young man, "make haste, let us be off."

At this impertinence Mademoiselle de Verneuil became calm and smiling.

"Do not go," she said to the young man, protecting him with a gesture that was full of dignity.

"Oh, what a beautiful head!" said the youth to his mother, who frowned heavily.

Annoyance, and many other sentiments, aroused and struggled with, did certainly bring fresh beauties to the young woman's face. Francine, Madame du Gua, and her son had all risen from their seats. Mademoiselle de Verneuil hastily advanced and stood between them and the commandant, who smiled amusedly; then she rapidly unfastened the frogged fastenings of her jacket. Acting with that blindness which often seizes women when their self-love is threatened and they are anxious to show their power, as a child is impatient to play with a toy that has just been given to it, she took from her bosom a paper and presented it to Hulot.

"Read that," she said, with a sarcastic laugh.

Then she turned to the young man and gave him, in the excitement of her triumph, a look in which mischief was mingled with an expression of love. Their brows cleared, joy flushed each agitated face, and a thousand contradictory thoughts rose in their hearts. Madame du Gua noted in that one look far more of love than of pity in Mademoiselle de Verneuil's intervention; and she was right. The handsome creature blushed beneath the other woman's gaze, understanding its

meaning, and dropped her eyelids ; then, as if aware of some threatening accusation, she raised her head proudly and defied all eyes. The commandant, petrified, returned the paper, countersigned by ministers, which enjoined all authorities to obey the orders of this mysterious lady. Having done so, he drew his sword, laid it across his knees, broke the blade, and flung away the pieces.

“Mademoiselle, you probably know what you are about ; but a Republican has his own ideas, and his own dignity. I cannot serve where women command. The First Consul will receive my resignation to-morrow ; others, who are not of my stripe, may obey you. I do not understand my orders and therefore I stop short, — all the more because I am supposed to understand them.”

There was silence for a moment, but it was soon broken by the young lady, who went up to the commandant and held out her hand, saying, “Colonel, though your beard is somewhat long, you may kiss my hand ; you are, indeed, a man !”

“I flatter myself I am, mademoiselle,” he replied, depositing a kiss upon the hand of this singular young woman rather awkwardly. “As for you, friend,” he said, threatening the young man with his finger, “you have had a narrow escape this time.”

“Commandant,” said the youth, “it is time all this nonsense should cease ; I am ready to go with you, if you like, to headquarters.”

“And bring your invisible owl, Marche-à-Terre ?”

“Who is Marche-à-Terre ?” asked the young man, with all the signs of genuine surprise.

“Did n’t he hoot just now ?”

"What did that hooting have to do with me, I should like to know? I supposed it was your soldiers letting you know of their arrival."

"Nonsense, you did not think that."

"Yes, I did. But do drink that glass of Bordeaux; the wine is good."

Surprised at the natural behavior of the youth and also by the frivolity of his manners and the youthfulness of his face, made even more juvenile by the careful curling of his fair hair, the commandant hesitated in the midst of his suspicions. He noticed that Madame du Gua was intently watching the glances that her son gave to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, and he asked her abruptly: "How old are you, *citoyenne*?"

"Ah, Monsieur l'officier," she said, "the rules of the Republic are very severe; must I tell you that I am thirty-eight?"

"May I be shot if I believe it! Marche-à-Terre is here; it was he who gave that cry; you are Chouans in disguise. God's thunder! I'll search the inn and make sure of it!"

Just then a hoot, somewhat like those that preceded it, came from the courtyard; the commandant rushed out, and missed seeing the pallor that covered Madame du Gua's face as he spoke. Hulot saw at once that the sound came from a postilion harnessing his horses to the coach, and he cast aside his suspicions, all the more because it seemed absurd to suppose that the Chouans would risk themselves in Alençon. He returned to the house confounded.

"I forgive him now, but later he shall pay dear for the anxiety he has given us," said the mother to the son, in a low voice, as Hulot re-entered the room.

The brave old officer showed on his worried face the struggle that went on in his mind betwixt a stern sense of duty and the natural kindness of his heart. He kept his gruff air, partly, perhaps, because he fancied he had deceived himself, but he took the glass of Bordeaux, and said: "Excuse me, comrade, but your Polytechnique does send such young officers —"

"The Chouans have younger ones," said the youth, laughing.

"For whom did you take my son?" asked Madame du Gua.

"For the Gars, the leader sent to the Chouans and the Vendéans by the British cabinet; his real name is Marquis de Montauran."

The commandant watched the faces of the suspected pair, who looked at each other with a puzzled expression that seemed to say: "Do you know that name?" "No, do you?" "What is he talking about?" "He's dreaming."

The sudden change in the manner of Marie de Verneuil, and her torpor as she heard the name of the royalist general was observed by no one but Francine, the only person to whom the least shade on that young face was visible. Completely routed, the commandant picked up the bits of his broken sword, looked at Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whose ardent beauty was beginning to find its way to his heart, and said: "As for you, mademoiselle, I take nothing back, and to-morrow these fragments of my sword will reach Bonaparte, unless —"

"Pooh! what do I care for Bonaparte, or your republic, or the king, or the Gars?" she cried, scarcely repressing an explosion of ill-bred temper.

A mysterious emotion, the passion of which gave to her face a dazzling color, showed that the whole world was nothing to the girl the moment that one individual was all in all to her. But she suddenly subdued herself into forced calmness, observing, like a trained actor, that the spectators were watching her. The commandant rose hastily and went out. Anxious and agitated, Mademoiselle de Verneuil followed him, stopped him in the corridor, and said, in an almost solemn tone: "Have you any good reason to suspect that young man of being the Gars?"

"God's thunder! mademoiselle, that fellow who rode here with you came back to warn me that the travellers in the mail-coach had all been murdered by the Chouans; I knew that, but what I didn't know was the name of the murdered persons, — it was Gua de Saint-Cyr!"

"Oh! if Corentin is at the bottom of all this, nothing surprises me," she cried, with a gesture of disgust.

The commandant went his way without daring to look at Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whose dangerous beauty began to affect him.

"If I had stayed two minutes longer I should have committed the folly of taking back my sword and escorting her," he was saying to himself as he went down the stairs.

As Madame du Gua watched the young man, whose eyes were fixed on the door through which Mademoiselle de Verneuil had passed, she said to him in a low voice: "You are incorrigible. You will perish through a woman. A doll can make you forget everything. Why did you allow her to breakfast with us? Who is a Demoiselle de Verneuil escorted by the Blues, who

accepts a breakfast from strangers and disarms an officer with a paper hidden in the bosom of her gown like a love-letter? She is one of those contemptible creatures by whose aid Fouché expects to lay hold of you, and the paper she showed the commandant ordered the Blues to assist her against you."

"Eh! madame," he replied in a sharp tone which went to the lady's heart and turned her pale; "her generous action disproves your supposition. Pray remember that the welfare of the king is the sole bond between us. You, who have had Charette at your feet must find the world without him empty; are you not living to avenge him?"

The lady stood still and pensive, like one who sees from the shore the wreck of all her treasures, and only the more eagerly longs for the vanished property.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil re-entered the room; the young man exchanged a smile with her and gave her a glance full of gentle meaning. However uncertain the future might seem, however ephemeral their union, the promises of their sudden love were only the more endearing to them. Rapid as the glance was, it did not escape the sagacious eye of Madame du Gua, who instantly understood it; her brow clouded, and she was unable to wholly conceal her jealous anger. Francine was observing her; she saw the eyes glitter, the cheeks flush; she thought she perceived a diabolical spirit in the face, stirred by some sudden and terrible revulsion. But lightning is not more rapid, nor death more prompt than this brief exhibition of inward emotion. Madame du Gua recovered her lively manner with such immediate self-possession that Francine fancied herself mistaken. Nevertheless, having once perceived in this

woman a violence of feeling that was fully equal to that of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, she trembled as she foresaw the clash with which such natures might come together, and the girl shuddered when she saw Mademoiselle de Verneuil go up to the young man with a passionate look and, taking him by the hand, draw him close beside her and into the light, with a coquettish gesture that was full of witchery.

"Now," she said, trying to read his eyes, "own to me that you are not the citizen du Gua Saint-Cyr."

"Yes, I am, mademoiselle."

"But he and his mother were killed yesterday."

"I am very sorry for that," he replied, laughing. "However that may be, I am none the less under a great obligation to you, for which I shall always feel the deepest gratitude and only wish I could prove it to you."

"I thought I was saving an *émigré*, but I love you better as a Republican."

The words escaped her lips as it were impulsively; she became confused; even her eyes blushed, and her face bore no other expression than one of exquisite simplicity of feeling; she softly released the young man's hand, not from shame at having pressed it, but because of a thought too weighty, it seemed, for her heart to bear, leaving him drunk with hope. Suddenly she appeared to regret this freedom, permissible as it might be under the passing circumstances of a journey. She recovered her conventional manner, bowed to the lady and her son, and taking Francine with her, left the room. When they reached their own chamber Francine wrung her hands and tossed her arms, as she looked at her mistress, saying: "Ah, Marie, what a crowd of

things in a moment of time ! who but you would have such adventures ? ”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil sprang forward and clasped Francine round the neck.

“ Ah ! this is life indeed — I am in heaven ! ”

“ Or hell,” retorted Francine.

“ Yes, hell if you like ! ” cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil. “ Here, give me your hand ; feel my heart, how it beats. There ’s fever in my veins ; the whole world is now a mere nothing to me ! How many times have I not seen that man in my dreams ! Oh ! how beautiful his head is — how his eyes sparkle ! ”

“ Will he love you ? ” said the simple peasant-woman, in a quivering voice, her face full of sad foreboding.

“ How can you ask me that ! ” cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil. “ But, Francine, tell me,” she added throwing herself into a pose that was half serious, half comic, “ will it be very hard to love me ? ”

“ No, but will he love you always ? ” replied Francine, smiling.

They looked at each other for a moment speechless, — Francine at revealing so much knowledge of life, and Marie at the perception, which now came to her for the first time, of a future of happiness in her passion. She seemed to herself hanging over a gulf of which she had wanted to know the depth, and listening to the fall of the stone she had flung, at first heedlessly, into it.

“ Well, it is my own affair,” she said, with the gesture of a gambler. “ I should never pity a betrayed woman ; she has no one but herself to blame if she is abandoned. I shall know how to keep, either living or dead, the man whose heart has once been mine. But,”

she added, with some surprise and after a moment's silence, "where did you get your knowledge of love, Francine?"

"Mademoiselle," said the peasant-woman, hastily, "hush, I hear steps in the passage."

"Ah! not *his* steps!" said Marie, listening. "But you are evading an answer; well, well, I'll wait for it, or guess it."

Francine was right, however. Three taps on the door interrupted the conversation. Captain Merle appeared, after receiving Mademoiselle de Verneuil's permission to enter.

With a military salute to the lady, whose beauty dazzled him, the soldier ventured on giving her a glance, but he found nothing better to say than: "Mademoiselle, I am at your orders."

"Then you are to be my protector, in place of the commander, who retires; is that so?"

"No, my superior is the adjutant-major Gérard, who has sent me here."

"Your commandant must be very much afraid of me," she said.

"Beg pardon, mademoiselle, Hulot is afraid of nothing. But women, you see, are not in his line; it ruffled him to have a general in a mob-cap."

"And yet," continued Mademoiselle de Verneuil, "it was his duty to obey his superiors. I like subordination, and I warn you that I shall allow no one to disobey me."

"That would be difficult," replied Merle, gallantly.

"Let us consult," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil. "You can get fresh troops here and accompany me to Mayenne, which I must reach this evening. Shall

we find other soldiers there, so that I might go on at once, without stopping at Mayenne? The Chouans are quite ignorant of our little expedition. If we travel at night, we can avoid meeting any number of them, and so escape an attack. Do you think this feasible?"

"Yes, mademoiselle."

"What sort of road is it between Mayenne and Fougères?"

"Rough; all up and down, a regular squirrel-wheel."

"Well, let us start at once. As we have nothing to fear near Alençon, you can go before me; we'll join you soon."

"One would think she had seen ten years' service," thought Merle, as he departed. "Hulot is mistaken; that young girl is not earning her living out of a feather-bed. Ten thousand cartridges! if I want to be adjutant-major I mustn't be such a fool as to mistake Saint-Michael for the devil."

During Mademoiselle de Verneuil's conference with the captain, Francine had slipped out for the purpose of examining, through a window of the corridor, the spot in the courtyard which had excited her curiosity on arriving at the inn. She watched the stable and the heaps of straw with the absorption of one who was saying her prayers to the Virgin, and she presently saw Madame du Gua approaching Marche-à-Terre with the precaution of a cat that dislikes to wet its feet. When the Chouan caught sight of the lady, he rose and stood before her in an attitude of deep respect. This singular circumstance roused Francine's curiosity; she slipped into the courtyard and along the walls, avoiding Madame du Gua's notice, and trying to hide herself behind the stable door. She walked on tiptoe, scarcely

daring to breathe, and succeeded in posting herself close to Marche-à-Terre, without exciting his attention.

"If, after all this information," the lady was saying to the Chouan, "it proves not to be her real name, you are to fire upon her without pity, as you would on a mad dog."

"Agreed!" said Marche-à-Terre.

The lady left him. The Chouan replaced his red woollen cap upon his head, remained standing, and was scratching his ear as if puzzled when Francine suddenly appeared before him, apparently by magic.

"Saint Anne of Auray!" he exclaimed. Then he dropped his whip, clasped his hands, and stood as if in ecstasy. A faint color illuminated his coarse face, and his eyes shone like diamonds dropped on a muck-heap. "Is it really the brave girl from Cottin?" he muttered, in a voice so smothered that he alone heard it. "You *are* fine," he said, after a pause, using the curious word, "godaine," a superlative in the dialect of those regions used by lovers to express the combination of fine clothes and beauty.

"I dare n't touch you," added Marche-à-Terre, putting out his big hand nevertheless, as if to weigh the gold chain which hung round her neck and below her waist.

"You had better not, Pierre," replied Francine, inspired by the instinct which makes a woman despotic when not oppressed. She drew back haughtily, after enjoying the Chouan's surprise; but she compensated for the harshness of her words by the softness of her glance, saying, as she once more approached him: "Pierre, that lady was talking to you about my young mistress, was n't she?"

Marche-à-Terre was silent; his face struggled, like the dawn, between clouds and light. He looked in turn at Francine, at the whip he had dropped, and at the chain, which seemed to have as powerful an attraction for him as the Breton girl herself. Then, as if to put a stop to his own uneasiness, he picked up his whip and still kept silence.

"Well, it is easy to see that that lady told you to kill my mistress," resumed Francine, who knew the faithful discretion of the peasant, and wished to relieve his scruples.

Marche-à-Terre lowered his head significantly. To the Cottin girl that was answer enough.

"Very good, Pierre," she said; "if any evil happens to her, if a hair of her head is injured, you and I will have seen each other for the last time; for I shall be in heaven, and you will go to hell."

The possessed of devils whom the Church in former days used to exorcise with great pomp were not more shaken and agitated than Marche-à-Terre at this prophecy, uttered with a conviction which gave it certainty. His glance, which at first had a character of savage tenderness, counteracted by a fanaticism as powerful in his soul as love, suddenly became surly, as he felt the imperious manner of the girl he had long since chosen. Francine interpreted his silence in her own way.

"Won't you do anything for my sake?" she said in a tone of reproach.

At these words the Chouan cast a glance at his mistress from eyes that were black as a crow's wing.

"Are you free?" he asked in a growl that Francine alone could have understood.

“Should I be here if I were not?” she replied, indignantly. “But you, what are you doing here? Still playing bandit, still roaming the country like a mad dog wanting to bite. Oh! Pierre, if you were wise you would come with me. This beautiful young lady, who, I ought to tell you, was nursed when a baby in our home, has taken care of me. I have two hundred francs a year from a good investment. And Mademoiselle has bought me my uncle Thomas’s big house for fifteen hundred francs, and I have saved two thousand beside.”

But her smiles and the announcement of her wealth fell dead before the dogged immovability of the Chouan.

“The priests have told us to go to war,” he replied. “Every Blue we shoot earns one indulgence.”

“But suppose the Blues shoot you?”

He answered by letting his arms drop at his sides, as if regretting the poverty of the offering he should thus make to God and the king.

“What will become of me?” exclaimed the young girl, sorrowfully.

Marche-à-Terre looked at her stupidly; his eyes seemed to enlarge; tears rolled down his hairy cheeks upon the goatskin which covered him, and a low moan came from his breast.

“Saint Anne of Auray! — Pierre, is this all you have to say to me after a parting of seven years? You have changed indeed.”

“I love you the same as ever,” said the Chouan, in a gruff voice.

“No,” she whispered, “the king is first.”

“If you look at me like that I shall go,” he said.

“Well, then, adieu,” she replied, sadly.

“Adieu,” he repeated.

He seized her hand, wrung it, kissed it, made the sign of the cross, and rushed into the stable, like a dog who fears that his bone will be taken from him.

"Pille-Miche," he said to his comrade. "Where's your tobacco-box?"

"Ho! *sacré bleu!* what a fine chain!" cried Pille-Miche, fumbling in a pocket constructed in his goatskin.

Then he held out to Marche-à-Terre the little horn in which Bretons put the finely powdered tobacco which they prepare themselves during the long winter nights. The Chouan raised his thumb and made a hollow in the palm of his hand, after the manner in which an "Invalid" takes his tobacco; then he shook the horn, the small end of which Pille-Miche had unscrewed. A fine powder fell slowly from the little hole pierced in the point of this Breton utensil. Marche-à-Terre went through the same process seven or eight times silently, as if the powder had power to change the current of his thoughts. Suddenly he flung the horn to Pille-Miche with a gesture of despair, and caught up a gun which was hidden in the straw.

"Seven or eight shakes at once! I suppose you think that costs nothing!" said the stingy Pille-Miche.

"Forward!" cried Marche-à-Terre in a hoarse voice. "There's work before us."

Thirty or more Chouans who were sleeping in the straw under the mangers, raised their heads, saw Marche-à-Terre on his feet, and disappeared instantly through a door which led to the garden, from which it was easy to reach the fields.

When Francine left the stable she found the mail-coach ready to start. Mademoiselle de Verneuil and her new fellow-travellers were already in it. The girl

shuddered as she saw her young mistress sitting side by side with the woman who had just ordered her death. The young man had taken his seat facing Marie, and as soon as Francine was in hers the heavy vehicle started at a good pace.

The sun had swept away the gray autumnal mists, and its rays were brightening the gloomy landscape with a look of youth and holiday. Many lovers fancy that such chance accidents of the sky are premonitions. Francine was surprised at the strange silence which fell upon the travellers. Mademoiselle de Verneuil had recovered her cold manner, and sat with her eyes lowered, her head slightly inclined, and her hands hidden under a sort of mantle in which she had wrapped herself. If she raised her eyes it was only to look at the passing scenery. Certain of being admired, she rejected admiration; but her apparent indifference was evidently more coquettish than natural. Purity, which gives such harmony to the diverse expressions by which a simple soul reveals itself, could lend no charm to a being whose every instinct predestined her to the storms of passion. Yielding himself up to the pleasures of this dawning intrigue, the young man did not try to explain the contradictions which were obvious between the coquetry and the enthusiasm of this singular young girl. Her assumed indifference allowed him to examine at his ease a face which was now as beautiful in its calmness as it had been when agitated. Like the rest of us, he was not disposed to question the sources of his enjoyment.

It is difficult for a pretty woman to avoid the glances of her companions in a carriage when their eyes fasten upon her as a visible distraction to the monotony of a journey. Happy, therefore, in being able to satisfy the

hunger of his dawning passion, without offence or avoidance on the part of its object, the young man studied the pure and brilliant lines of the girl's head and face. To him they were a picture. Sometimes the light brought out the transparent rose of the nostrils and the double curve which united the nose with the upper lip ; at other times a pale glint of sunshine illuminated the tints of the skin, pearly beneath the eyes and round the mouth, rosy on the cheeks, and ivory-white about the temples and throat. He admired the contrasts of light and shade caused by the masses of black hair surrounding her face and giving it an ephemeral grace, — for all is fleeting in a woman ; her beauty of to-day is often not that of yesterday, fortunately for herself, perhaps ! The young man, who was still at an age when youth delights in the nothings which are the all of love, watched eagerly for each movement of the eyelids, and the seductive rise and fall of her bosom as she breathed. Sometimes he fancied, suiting the tenor of his thoughts, that he could see a meaning in the expression of the eyes and the imperceptible inflection of the lips. Every gesture betrayed to him the soul, every motion a new aspect of the young girl. If a thought stirred those mobile features, if a sudden blush suffused the cheeks, or a smile brought life into the face, he found a fresh delight in trying to discover the secrets of this mysterious creature. Everything about her was a snare to the soul and a snare to the senses. Even the silence that fell between them, far from raising an obstacle to the understanding of their hearts, became the common ground for mutual thoughts. But after a while the many looks in which their eyes encountered each other warned Marie de Verneuil that the silence was com-

promising her, and she turned to Madame du Gua with one of those commonplace remarks which open the way to conversation ; but even in so doing she included the young man.

“Madame,” she said, “how could you put your son into the navy? have you not doomed yourself to perpetual anxiety?”

“Mademoiselle, the fate of women, of mothers I should say, is to tremble for the safety of their dear ones.”

“Your son is very like you.”

“Do you think so, mademoiselle?”

The smile with which the young man listened to these remarks increased the vexation of his pretended mother. Her hatred grew with every passionate glance he turned on Marie. Silence or conversation, all increased the dreadful wrath which she carefully concealed beneath a cordial manner.

“Mademoiselle,” said the young man, “you are quite mistaken. Naval men are not more exposed to danger than soldiers. Women ought not to dislike the navy; we sailors have a merit beyond that of the military, — we are faithful to our mistresses.”

“Oh, from necessity,” replied Mademoiselle de Verneuil, laughing.

“But even so, it is fidelity,” said Madame du Gua, in a deep voice.

The conversation grew lively, touching upon subjects that were interesting to none but the three travellers, for under such circumstances intelligent persons give new meanings to commonplace talk ; but every word, insignificant as it might seem, was a mutual interrogation, hiding the desires, hopes, and passions which

agitated them. Marie's cleverness and quick perceptions (for she was fully on her guard) showed Madame du Gua that calumny and treachery could alone avail to triumph over a rival as formidable through her intellect as by her beauty. The mail-coach presently overtook the escort, and then advanced more slowly. The young man, seeing a long hill before them, proposed to the young lady that they should walk. The friendly politeness of his offer decided her, and her consent flattered him.

"Is Madame of our opinion?" she said, turning to Madame du Gua. "Will she walk, too?"

"Coquette!" said the lady to herself, as she left the coach.

Marie and the young man walked together, but a little apart. The sailor, full of ardent desires, was determined to break the reserve that checked him, of which, however, he was not the dupe. He fancied he could succeed by dallying with the young lady in that tone of courteous amiability and wit, sometimes frivolous, sometimes serious, always chivalric and occasionally satirical, which characterized the men of the exiled aristocracy. But the smiling Parisian beauty parried him so mischievously, and rejected his frivolities with such disdain, evidently preferring the stronger ideas and enthusiasms which he betrayed from time to time in spite of himself, that he presently began to understand the true way of pleasing her. The conversation then changed. He realized the hopes her expressive face had given him; yet, as he did so, new difficulties arose, and he was still forced to suspend his judgment on a girl who seemed to take delight in thwarting him, a siren with whom he grew more and

more in love. After yielding to the seduction of her beauty he was still more attracted to her mysterious soul, with a curiosity which Marie perceived and took pleasure in exciting. Their intercourse assumed, insensibly, a character of intimacy far removed from the tone of indifference which Mademoiselle de Verneuil endeavored in vain to give to it.

Though Madame du Gua had followed the lovers, the latter had unconsciously walked so much more rapidly than she that a distance of several hundred feet soon separated them. The charming pair trod the fine sand beneath their feet, listening with childlike delight to the union of their footsteps, happy in being wrapped by the same ray of a sunshine that seemed spring-like, in breathing with the same breath autumnal perfumes laden with vegetable odors which seemed a nourishment brought by the breezes to their dawning love. Though to them it may have been a mere circumstance of their fortuitous meeting, yet the sky, the landscape, the season of the year, did communicate to their emotions a tinge of melancholy gravity which gave them an element of passion. They praised the weather and talked of its beauty; then of their strange encounter, of the coming rupture of an intercourse so delightful; of the ease with which, in travelling, friendships, lost as soon as made, are formed. After this last remark, the young man profited by what seemed to be a tacit permission to make a few tender confidences, and to risk an avowal of love like a man who was not unaccustomed to such situations.

“Have you noticed, mademoiselle,” he said, “how little the feelings of the heart follow the old conventional rules in the days of terror in which we live?”

Everything about us bears the stamp of suddenness. We love in a day, or we hate on the strength of a single glance. We are bound to each other for life in a moment, or we part with the celerity of death itself. All things are hurried, like the convulsions of the nation. In the midst of such dangers as ours the ties that bind should be stronger than under the ordinary course of life. In Paris during the Terror, every one came to know the full meaning of a clasp of the hand as men do on a battle-field."

"People felt the necessity of living fast and ardently," she answered, "for they had little time to live." Then, with a glance at her companion which seemed to tell him that the end of their short intercourse was approaching, she added, maliciously: "You are very well informed as to the affairs of life, for a young man who has just left the *École Polytechnique*!"

"What are you thinking of me?" he said after a moment's silence. "Tell me frankly, without disguise."

"You wish to acquire the right to speak to me of myself," she said laughing.

"You do not answer me," he went on after a slight pause. "Take care, silence is sometimes significant."

"Do you think I cannot guess all that you would like to say to me? Good heavens! you have already said enough."

"Oh, if we understand each other," he replied, smiling, "I have obtained even more than I dared hope for."

She smiled in return so graciously that she seemed to accept the courteous struggle into which all men like to draw a woman. They persuaded themselves, half in jest, half in earnest, that they never could be more to each

other than they were at that moment. The young man fancied, therefore, he might give reins to a passion that could have no future; the young woman felt she might smile upon it. Marie suddenly struck her foot against a stone and stumbled.

"Take my arm," said her companion.

"It seems I must," she replied; "you would be too proud if I refused; you would fancy I feared you."

"Ah, mademoiselle," he said, pressing her arm against his heart that she might feel the beating of it, "you flatter my pride by granting such a favor."

"Well, the readiness with which I do so will cure your illusions."

"Do you wish to save me from the danger of the emotions you cause?"

"Stop, stop!" she cried; "do not try to entangle me in such boudoir riddles. I don't like to find the wit of fools in a man of your character. See! here we are beneath the glorious sky, in the open country; before us, above us, all is grand. You wish to tell me that I am beautiful, do you not? Well, your eyes have already told me so; besides, I know it; I am not a woman whom mere compliments can please. But perhaps you would like," this with satirical emphasis, "to talk about your *sentiments*?' Do you think me so simple as to believe that sudden sympathies are powerful enough to influence a whole life through the recollections of one morning?"

"Not the recollections of a morning," he said, "but those of a beautiful woman who has shown herself generous."

"You forget," she retorted, laughing, "half my attractions, — a mysterious woman, with everything odd

about her, name, rank, situation, freedom of thought and manners."

"You are not mysterious to me!" he exclaimed. "I have fathomed you; there is nothing that could be added to your perfections except a little more faith in the love you inspire."

"Ah, my poor child of eighteen, what can you know of love?" she said smiling. "Well, well, so be it!" she added, "it is a fair subject of conversation, like the weather when one pays a visit. You shall find that I have neither false modesty nor petty fears. I can hear the word love without blushing; it has been so often said to me without one echo of the heart that I think it quite unmeaning. I have met with it everywhere, in books, at the theatre, in society, — yes, everywhere, and never have I found in it even a semblance of its magnificent ideal."

"Did you seek that ideal?"

"Yes."

The word was said with such perfect ease and freedom that the young man made a gesture of surprise and looked at Marie fixedly, as if he had suddenly changed his opinion on her character and real position.

"Mademoiselle," he said with ill-concealed emotion, "are you maid or wife, angel or devil?"

"All," she replied, laughing. "Is n't there something diabolic and also angelic in a young girl who has never loved, does not love, and perhaps will never love?"

"Do you think yourself happy thus?" he asked with a free and easy tone and manner, as though already he felt less respect for her.

"Oh, happy, no," she replied. "When I think that

I am alone, hampered by social conventions that make me deceitful, I envy the privileges of a man. But when I also reflect on the means which nature has bestowed on us women to catch and entangle you men in the invisible meshes of a power which you cannot resist, then the part assigned me in the world is not displeasing to me. And then again, suddenly, it does seem very petty, and I feel that I should despise a man who allowed himself to be duped by such vulgar seductions. No sooner do I perceive our power and like it, than I know it to be horrible and I abhor it. Sometimes I feel within me that longing towards devotion which makes my sex so nobly beautiful; and then I feel a desire, which consumes me, for dominion and power. Perhaps it is the natural struggle of the good and the evil principle in which all creatures live here below. Angel or devil! you have expressed it. Ah! to-day is not the first time that I have recognized my double nature. But we women understand better than you men can do our own shortcomings. We have an instinct which shows us a perfection in all things to which, nevertheless, we fail to attain. But," she added, sighing as she glanced at the sky; "that which enhances us in your eyes is —"

"Is what?" he said.

"—that we are all struggling, more or less," she answered, "against a thwarted destiny."

"Mademoiselle, why should we part to-night?"

"Ah!" she replied, smiling at the passionate look which he gave her, "let us get into the carriage; the open air does not agree with us."

Marie turned abruptly; the young man followed her, and pressed her arm with little respect, but in a manner

that expressed his imperious admiration. She hastened her steps. Seeing that she wished to escape an importunate declaration, he became the more ardent; being determined to win a first favor from this woman, he risked all and said, looking at her meaningly: —

“ Shall I tell you a secret? ”

“ Yes, quickly, if it concerns you. ”

“ I am not in the service of the Republic. Where are you going? I shall follow you. ”

At the words Marie trembled violently. She withdrew her arm and covered her face with both hands to hide either the flush or the pallor of her cheeks; then she suddenly uncovered her face and said in a voice of deep emotion: —

“ Then you began as you would have ended, by deceiving me? ”

“ Yes, ” he said.

At this answer she turned again from the carriage, which was now overtaking them, and began to almost run along the road.

“ I thought, ” he said, following her, “ that the open air did not agree with you? ”

“ Oh! it has changed, ” she replied in a grave tone, continuing to walk on, a prey to agitating thoughts.

“ You do not answer me, ” said the young man, his heart full of the soft expectation of coming pleasure.

“ Oh! ” she said, in a strained voice, “ the tragedy begins. ”

“ What tragedy? ” he asked.

She stopped short, looked at the young student from head to foot with a mingled expression of fear and curiosity; then she concealed the feelings that were agitating her under the mask of an impenetrable calmness,

showing that for a girl of her age she had great experience of life.

“Who are you?” she said, — “but I know already; when I first saw you I suspected it. You are the royalist leader whom they call the Gars. The ex-bishop of Autun was right in saying we should always believe in presentiments which give warning of evil.”

“What interest have you in knowing the Gars?”

“What interest has he in concealing himself from me who have already saved his life?” She began to laugh, but the merriment was forced. “I have wisely prevented you from saying that you love me. Let me tell you, monsieur, that I abhor you. I am republican, you are royalist; I would deliver you up if you were not under my protection, and if I had not already saved your life, and if—” she stopped. These violent extremes of feeling and the inward struggle which she no longer attempted to conceal alarmed the young man, who tried, but in vain, to observe her calmly. “Let us part here at once, — I insist upon it; farewell!” she said. She turned hastily back, made a few steps, and then returned to him. “No, no,” she continued, “I have too great an interest in knowing who you are. Hide nothing from me; tell me the truth. Who are you? for you are no more a pupil of the *École Polytechnique* than you are eighteen years old.”

“I am a sailor, ready to leave the ocean and follow you wherever your imagination may lead you. If I have been so lucky as to rouse your curiosity in any particular I shall be very careful not to lessen it. Why mingle the serious affairs of real life with the life of the heart in which we are beginning to understand each other?”

"Our souls might have understood each other," she said in a grave voice. "But I have no right to exact your confidence. You will never know the extent of your obligations to me; I shall not explain them."

They walked a few steps in silence.

"My life does interest you," said the young man.

"Monsieur, I implore you, tell me your name or else be silent. You are a child," she added, with an impatient movement of her shoulders, "and I feel a pity for you."

The obstinacy with which she insisted on knowing his name made the pretended sailor hesitate between prudence and love. The vexation of a desired woman is powerfully attractive; her anger, like her submission, is imperious; many are the fibres she touches in a man's heart, penetrating and subjugating it. Was this scene only another aspect of Mademoiselle de Verneuil's coquetry? In spite of his sudden passion the unnamed lover had the strength to distrust a woman thus bent on forcing from him a secret of life and death.

"Why has my rash indiscretion, which sought to give a future to our present meeting, destroyed the happiness of it?" he said, taking her hand, which she left in his unconsciously.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who seemed to be in real distress, was silent.

"How have I displeased you?" he said. "What can I do to soothe you?"

"Tell me your name."

He made no reply, and they walked some distance in silence. Suddenly Mademoiselle de Verneuil stopped short, like one who has come to some serious determination.

“Monsieur le Marquis de Montauran,” she said, with dignity, but without being able to conceal entirely the nervous trembling of her features, “I desire to do you a great service, whatever it may cost me. We part here. The coach and its escort are necessary for your protection, and you must continue your journey in it. Fear nothing from the Republicans; they are men of honor, and I shall give the adjutant certain orders which he will faithfully execute. As for me, I shall return on foot to Alençon with my maid, and take a few of the soldiers with me. Listen to what I say, for your life depends on it. If, before you reach a place of safety, you meet that odious man you saw in my company at the inn, escape at once, for he will instantly betray you. As for me, —” she paused, — “as for me, I fling myself back into the miseries of life. Farewell, monsieur, may you be happy; farewell.”

She made a sign to Captain Merle, who was just then reaching the brow of the hill behind her. The marquis was taken unawares by her sudden action.

“Stop!” he cried, in a tone of despair that was well acted.

This singular caprice of a girl for whom he would at that instant have thrown away his life so surprised him, that he invented, on the spur of the moment, a fatal fiction by which to hide his name and satisfy the curiosity of his companion.

“You have almost guessed the truth,” he said. “I am an *émigré*, condemned to death, and my name is Vicomte de Bauvan. Love of my country has brought me back to France to join my brother. I hope to be taken off the list of *émigrés* through the influence of Madame de Beauharnais, now the wife of the First

Consul ; but if I fail in this, I mean to die on the soil of my native land, fighting beside my friend Montauran. I am now on my way secretly, by means of a passport he has sent me, to learn if any of my property in Brittany is still unconfiscated."

While the young man spoke Mademoiselle de Verneuil examined him with a penetrating eye. She tried at first to doubt his words, but being by nature confiding and trustful, she slowly regained an expression of serenity, and said eagerly, "Monsieur, are you telling me the exact truth?"

"Yes, the exact truth," replied the young man, who seemed to have no conscience in his dealings with women.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil gave a deep sigh, like a person who returns to life.

"Ah!" she exclaimed, "I am very happy."

"Then you hate that poor Montauran?"

"No," she said; "but I could not make you understand my meaning. I was not willing that *you* should meet the dangers from which I will try to protect him, —since he is your friend."

"Who told you that Montauran was in danger?"

"Ah, monsieur, even if I had not come from Paris, where his enterprise is the one thing talked of, the commandant at Alençon said enough to show his danger."

"Then let me ask you how you expect to save him from it."

"Suppose I do not choose to answer," she replied, with the haughty air that women often assume to hide an emotion. "What right have you to know my secrets?"

“The right of a man who loves you.”

“Already?” she said. “No, you do not love me. I am only an object of passing gallantry to you, — that is all. I am clear-sighted; did I not penetrate your disguise at once? A woman who knows anything of good society could not be misled, in these days, by a pupil of the Polytechnique who uses choice language, and conceals as little as you do the manners of a *grand seigneur* under the mask of a Republican. There is a trifle of powder left in your hair, and a fragrance of nobility clings to you which a woman of the world cannot fail to detect. Therefore, fearing that the man whom you saw accompanying me, who has all the shrewdness of a woman, might make the same discovery, I sent him away. Monsieur, let me tell you that a true Republican officer just from the Polytechnique would not have made love to me as you have done, and would not have taken me for a pretty adventuress. Allow me, Monsieur de Bauvan, to preach you a little sermon from a woman’s point of view. Are you too juvenile to know that of all the creatures of my sex the most difficult to subdue is that same adventuress, — she whose price is ticketed and who is weary of pleasure. That sort of woman requires, they tell me, constant seduction; she yields only to her own caprices; any attempt to please her argues, I should suppose, great conceit on the part of a man. But let us put aside that class of women, among whom you have been good enough to rank me; you ought to understand that a young woman, handsome, brilliant, and of noble birth (for, I suppose, you will grant me those advantages), does not sell herself, and can only be won by the man who loves her in one way.

You understand me? If she loves him and is willing to commit a folly, she must be justified by great and heroic reasons. Forgive me this logic, rare in my sex ; but for the sake of your happiness, — and my own,” she added, dropping her head, — “I will not allow either of us to deceive the other, nor will I permit you to think that Mademoiselle de Verneuil, angel or devil, maid or wife, is capable of being seduced by commonplace gallantry.”

“Mademoiselle,” said the marquis, whose surprise, though he concealed it, was extreme, and who at once became a man of the great world, “I entreat you to believe that I take you to be a very noble person, full of the highest sentiments, or — a charming girl, as you please.”

“I don’t ask all that,” she said, laughing. “Allow me to keep my incognito. My mask is better than yours, and it pleases me to wear it, — if only to discover whether those who talk to me of love are sincere. Therefore, beware of me ! Monsieur,” she cried, catching his arm vehemently, “listen to me ; if you were able to prove that your love is true, nothing, no human power, could part us. Yes, I would fain unite myself to the noble destiny of some great man, and marry a vast ambition, glorious hopes ! Noble hearts are never faithless, for constancy is in their fibre ; I should be forever loved, forever happy, — I would make my body a stepping-stone by which to raise the man who loved me ; I would sacrifice all things to him, bear all things from him, and love him forever, — even if he ceased to love me. I have never before dared to confess to another heart the secrets of mine, nor the passionate enthusiasms which exhaust me ; but I tell you some-

thing of them now because, as soon as I have seen you in safety, we shall part forever."

"Part? never!" he cried, electrified by the tones of that vigorous soul which seemed to be fighting against some overwhelming thought.

"Are you free?" she said, with a haughty glance which subdued him.

"Free! yes, except for the sentence of death which hangs over me."

She added presently, in a voice full of bitter feeling: "If all this were not a dream, a glorious life might indeed be ours. But I have been talking folly; let us beware of committing any. When I think of all you would have to be before you could rate me at my proper value I doubt everything —"

"I doubt nothing if you will only grant me —"

"Hush!" she cried, hearing a note of true passion in his voice, "the open air is decidedly disagreeing with us; let us return to the coach."

That vehicle soon came up; they took their places and drove on several miles in total silence. Both had matter for reflection, but henceforth their eyes no longer feared to meet. Each now seemed to have an equal interest in observing the other, and in mutually hiding important secrets; but for all that they were drawn together by one and the same impulse, which now, as a result of this interview, assumed the dimensions of a passion. They recognized in each other qualities which promised to heighten all the pleasures to be derived from either their contest or their union. Perhaps both of them, living a life of adventure, had reached the singular moral condition in which, either from weariness or in defiance of fate, the mind rejects serious reflection

and flings itself on chance in pursuing an enterprise precisely because the issues of chance are unknown, and the interest of expecting them vivid. The moral nature, like the physical nature, has its abysses into which strong souls love to plunge, risking their future as gamblers risk their fortune. Mademoiselle de Verneuil and the young marquis had obtained a revelation of each other's minds as a consequence of this interview, and their intercourse thus took rapid strides, for the sympathy of their souls succeeded to that of their senses. Besides, the more they felt fatally drawn to each other, the more eager they were to study the secret action of their minds. The so-called Vicomte de Bauvan, surprised at the seriousness of the strange girl's ideas, asked himself how she could possibly combine such acquired knowledge of life with so much youth and freshness. He thought he discovered an extreme desire to appear chaste in the modesty and reserve of her attitudes. He suspected her of playing a part; he questioned the nature of his own pleasure; and ended by choosing to consider her a clever actress. He was right; Mademoiselle de Verneuil, like other women of the world, grew the more reserved the more she felt the warmth of her own feelings, assuming with perfect naturalness the appearance of prudery, beneath which such women veil their desires. They all wish to offer themselves as virgins on love's altar; and if they are not so, the deception they seek to practise is at least a homage which they pay to their lovers. These thoughts passed rapidly through the mind of the young man and gratified him. In fact, for both, this mutual examination was an advance in their intercourse, and the lover soon came to that phase of passion in which

a man finds in the defects of his mistress a reason for loving her the more.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil was thoughtful. Perhaps her imagination led her over a greater extent of the future than that of the young *émigré*, who was merely following one of the many impulses of his life as a man ; whereas Marie was considering a lifetime, thinking to make it beautiful, and to fill it with happiness and with grand and noble sentiments. Happy in such thoughts, more in love with her ideal than with the actual reality, with the future rather than with the present, she desired now to return upon her steps so as to better establish her power. In this she acted instinctively, as all women act. Having agreed with her soul that she would give herself wholly up, she wished — if we may so express it — to dispute every fragment of the gift ; she longed to take back from the past all her words and looks and acts and make them more in harmony with the dignity of a woman beloved. Her eyes at times expressed a sort of terror as she thought of the interview just over, in which she had shown herself aggressive. But as she watched the face before her, instinct with power, and felt that a being so strong must also be generous, she glowed at the thought that her part in life would be nobler than that of most women, inasmuch as her lover was a man of character, a man condemned to death, who had come to risk his life in making war against the Republic. The thought of occupying such a soul to the exclusion of all rivals gave a new aspect to many matters. Between the moment, only five hours earlier, when she composed her face and toned her voice to allure the young man, and the present moment, when she was able to convulse him with a look, there was all

the difference to her between a dead world and a living one.

In the condition of soul in which Mademoiselle de Verneuil now existed external life seemed to her a species of phantasmagoria. The carriage passed through villages and valleys and mounted hills which left no impressions on her mind. They reached Mayenne; the soldiers of the escort were changed; Merle spoke to her; she replied; they crossed the whole town and were again in the open country; but the faces, houses, streets, landscape, men, swept past her like the figments of a dream. Night came, and Marie was travelling beneath a diamond sky, wrapped in soft light, and yet she was not aware that darkness had succeeded day; that Mayenne was passed; that Fougères was near; she knew not even where she was going. That she should part in a few hours from the man she had chosen, and who, she believed, had chosen her, was not for her a possibility. Love is the only passion which looks to neither past nor future. Occasionally her thoughts escaped in broken words, in phrases devoid of meaning, though to her lover's ears they sounded like promises of love. To the two witnesses of this birth of passion she seemed to be rushing onward with fearful rapidity. Francine knew Marie as well as Madame du Gua knew the marquis, and their experience of the past made them await in silence some terrible finale. It was, indeed, not long before the end came to the drama which Mademoiselle de Verneuil had called, without perhaps imagining the truth of her words, a tragedy.

When the travellers were about three miles beyond Mayenne they heard a horseman riding after them with great rapidity. When he reached the carriage he leaned

towards it to look at Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who recognized Corentin. That offensive personage made her a sign of intelligence, the familiarity of which was deeply mortifying; then he turned away, after chilling her to the bone with a look full of some base meaning. The young *émigré* seemed painfully affected by this circumstance, which did not escape the notice of his pretended mother; but Marie softly touched him, seeming by her eyes to take refuge in his heart as though it were her only haven. His brow cleared at this proof of the full extent of his mistress's attachment, coming to him as it were by accident. An inexplicable fear seemed to have overcome her coyness, and her love was visible for a moment without a veil. Unfortunately for both of them, Madame du Gua saw it all; like a miser who gives a feast, she seemed to count the morsels and begrudge the wine.

Absorbed in their happiness the lovers arrived, without any consciousness of the distance they had traversed, at that part of the road which passed through the valley of Ernée. There Francine noticed and showed to her companions a number of strange forms which seemed to move like shadows among the trees and gorse that surrounded the fields. When the carriage came within range of these shadows a volley of musketry, the balls of which whistled above their heads, warned the travellers that the shadows were realities. The escort had fallen into a trap.

Captain Merle now keenly regretted having adopted Mademoiselle de Verneuil's idea that a rapid journey by night would be a safe one, — an error which had led him to reduce his escort from Mayenne to sixty men. He at once, under Gérard's orders, divided his little

troop into two columns, one on each side of the road, which the two officers marched at a quick step among the gorse hedges, eager to meet the assailants, though ignorant of their number. The Blues beat the thick bushes right and left with rash intrepidity, and replied to the Chouans with a steady fire.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil's first impulse was to jump from the carriage and run back along the road until she was out of sight of the battle; but ashamed of her fears, and moved by the feeling which impels us all to act nobly under the eyes of those we love, she presently stood still, endeavoring to watch the combat coolly.

The marquis followed her, took her hand, and placed it on his breast.

"I was afraid," she said, smiling, "but now —"

Just then her terrified maid cried out: "Marie, take care!"

But as she said the words, Francine, who was springing from the carriage, felt herself grasped by a strong hand. The sudden weight of that enormous hand made her shriek violently; she turned, and was instantly silenced on recognizing Marche-à-Terre.

"Twice I owe to chance," said the marquis to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, "the revelation of the sweetest secrets of the heart. Thanks to Francine I now know you bear the gracious name of Marie, — Marie, the name I have invoked in my distresses, — Marie, a name I shall henceforth speak in joy, and never without sacrifice, mingling religion and love. There can be no wrong where prayer and love go together."

They clasped hands, looked silently into each other's eyes, and the excess of their emotion took away from them the power to express it.

“There’s no danger for *the rest of you*,” Marche-à-Terre was saying roughly to Francine, giving to his hoarse and guttural voice a reproachful tone, and emphasizing his last words in a way to stupefy the innocent peasant-girl. For the first time in her life she saw ferocity in that face. The moonlight seemed to heighten the effect of it. The savage Breton, holding his cap in one hand and his heavy carbine in the other, dumpy and thickset as a gnome, and bathed in that white light the shadows of which give such fantastic aspects to forms, seemed to belong more to a world of goblins than to reality. This apparition and its tone of reproach came upon Francine with the suddenness of a phantom. He turned rapidly to Madame du Gua, with whom he exchanged a few eager words, which Francine, who had somewhat forgotten the dialect of Lower Brittany, did not understand. The lady seemed to be giving him a series of orders. The short conference ended by an imperious gesture of the lady’s hand pointing out to the Chouan the lovers standing a little distance apart. Before obeying, Marche-à-Terre glanced at Francine whom he seemed to pity; he wished to speak to her, and the girl was aware that his silence was compulsory. The rough and sunburnt skin of his forehead wrinkled, and his eyebrows were drawn violently together. Did he think of disobeying a renewed order to kill Made-moiselle de Verneuil? The contortion of his face made him all the more hideous to Madame du Gua, but to Francine the flash of his eye seemed almost gentle, for it taught her to feel intuitively that the violence of his savage nature would yield to her will as a woman, and that she reigned, next to God, in that rough heart.

The lovers were interrupted in their tender interview

by Madame du Gua, who ran up to Marie with a cry, and pulled her away as though some danger threatened her. Her real object however, was to enable a member of the royalist committee of Alençon, whom she saw approaching them, to speak privately to the Gars.

"Beware of the girl you met at the hotel in Alençon; she will betray you," said the Chevalier de Valois, in the young man's ear; and immediately he and his little Breton horse disappeared among the bushes from which he had issued.

The firing was heavy at that moment, but the combatants did not come to close quarters.

"Adjutant," said Clef-des-Cœurs, "isn't it a sham attack, to capture our travellers and get a ransom?"

"The devil is in it, but I believe you are right," replied Gérard, darting back towards the highroad.

Just then the Chouan fire slackened, for, in truth, the whole object of the skirmish was to give the chevalier an opportunity to utter his warning to the Gars. Merle, who saw the enemy disappearing across the hedges, thought best not to follow them nor to enter upon a fight that was uselessly dangerous. Gérard ordered the escort to take its former position on the road, and the convoy was again in motion without the loss of a single man. The captain offered his hand to Mademoiselle de Verneuil to replace her in the coach, for the young nobleman stood motionless, as if thunderstruck. Marie, amazed at his attitude, got into the carriage alone without accepting the politeness of the Republican; she turned her head towards her lover, saw him still motionless, and was stupefied at the sudden change which had evidently come over him. The young man slowly returned, his whole manner betraying deep disgust.

“Was I not right?” said Madame du Gua in his ear, as she led him to the coach. “We have fallen into the hands of a creature who is trafficking for your head; but since she is such a fool as to have fallen in love with you, for heaven’s sake don’t behave like a boy; pretend to love her at least till we reach La Vivetière; once there — But,” she thought to herself, seeing the young man take his place with a dazed air, as if bewildered, “can it be that he already loves her?”

The coach rolled on over the sandy road. To Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s eyes all seemed changed. Death was gliding beside her love. Perhaps it was only fancy, but, to a woman who loves, fancy is as vivid as reality. Francine, who had clearly understood from Marche-à-Terre’s glance that Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s fate, over which she had commanded him to watch, was in other hands than his, looked pale and haggard, and could scarcely restrain her tears when her mistress spoke to her. To her eyes Madame du Gua’s female malignancy was scarcely concealed by her treacherous smiles, and the sudden change which her obsequious attentions to Mademoiselle de Verneuil made in her manners, voice, and expression was of a nature to frighten a watchful observer. Mademoiselle de Verneuil herself shuddered instinctively, asking herself, “Why should I fear? She is his mother.” Then she trembled in every limb as the thought crossed her mind, “Is she really his mother?” An abyss suddenly opened before her, and she cast a look upon the mother and son, which finally enlightened her. “That woman loves him!” she thought. “But why has she begun these attentions after showing me such coolness? Am I lost? or — is she afraid of me?”

As for the young man, he was flushed and pale by turns ; but he kept a quiet attitude and lowered his eyes to conceal the emotions which agitated him. The graceful curve of his lips was lost in their close compression, and his skin turned yellow under the struggle of his stormy thoughts. Mademoiselle de Verneuil was unable to decide whether any love for her remained in his evident anger. The road, flanked by woods at this particular point, became darker and more gloomy, and the obscurity prevented the eyes of the silent travellers from questioning each other. The sighing of the wind, the rustling of the trees, the measured step of the escort, gave that almost solemn character to the scene which quickens the pulses. Mademoiselle de Verneuil could not long try in vain to discover the reason of this change. The recollection of Corentin came to her like a flash, and reminded her suddenly of her real destiny. For the first time since the morning she reflected seriously on her position. Until then she had yielded herself up to the delight of loving, without a thought of the past or of the future. Unable to bear the agony of her mind, she sought, with the patience of love, to obtain a look from the young man's eyes, and when she did so her paleness and the quiver in her face had so penetrating an influence over him that he wavered ; but the softening was momentary.

"Are you ill, mademoiselle?" he said, but his voice had no gentleness ; the very question, the look, the gesture, all served to convince her that the events of this day belonged to a mirage of the soul which was fast disappearing like mists before the wind.

"Am I ill?" she replied, with a forced laugh. "I was going to ask you the same question."

"I supposed you understood each other," remarked Madame du Gua with specious kindliness.

Neither the young man nor Mademoiselle de Verneuil replied. The girl, doubly insulted, was angered at feeling her powerful beauty powerless. She knew she could discover the cause of the present situation the moment she chose to do so; but, for the first time, perhaps, a woman recoiled before a secret. Human life is sadly fertile in situations where, as a result of either too much meditation or of some catastrophe, our thoughts seem to hold to nothing; they have no substance, no point of departure, and the present has no hooks by which to hold to the past or fasten on the future. This was Mademoiselle de Verneuil's condition at the present moment. Leaning back in the carriage, she sat there like an uprooted shrub. Silent and suffering, she looked at no one, wrapped herself in her grief, and buried herself so completely in the unseen world, the refuge of the miserable, that she saw nothing around her. Crows crossed the road in the air above them cawing, but although, like all strong hearts, hers had a superstitious corner, she paid no attention to the omen. The party travelled on in silence. "Already parted?" Mademoiselle de Verneuil was saying to herself. "Yet no one about us has uttered one word. Could it be Corentin? It is not his interest to speak. Who can have come to this spot and accused me? Just loved, and already abandoned! I sow attraction, and I reap contempt. Is it my perpetual fate to see happiness and ever lose it?" Pangs hitherto unknown to her wrung her heart, for she now loved truly and for the first time. Yet she had not so wholly delivered herself to her lover that she could not

take refuge from her pain in the natural pride and dignity of a young and beautiful woman. The secret of her love—a secret often kept by women under torture itself—had not escaped her lips. Presently she rose from her reclining attitude, ashamed that she had shown her passion by her silent sufferings; she shook her head with a light-hearted action, and showed a face, or rather a mask, that was gay and smiling; then she raised her voice to disguise the quiver of it.

“Where are we?” she said to Captain Merle, who kept himself at a certain distance from the carriage.

“About six miles from Fougères, mademoiselle.”

“We shall soon be there, shall we not?” she went on, to encourage a conversation in which she might show some preference for the young captain.

“A Breton mile,” said Merle much delighted, “has the disadvantage of never ending; when you are at the top of one hill you see a valley and another hill. When you reach the summit of the slope we are now ascending you will see the plateau of Mont Pèlerine in the distance. Let us hope the Chouans won’t take their revenge there. Now, in going up hill and going down hill one does n’t make much headway. From La Pèlerine you will still see —”

The young *émigré* made a movement at the name which Marie alone noticed.

“What is La Pèlerine?” she asked hastily, interrupting the captain’s description of Breton topography.

“It is the summit of a mountain,” said Merle, “which gives its name to the Maine valley through which we shall presently pass. It separates this valley from that of Couësson, at the end of which is the town of Fougères, the chief town in Brittany. We had a

fight there last Vendémiaire with the Gars and his brigands. We were escorting Breton conscripts, who meant to kill us sooner than leave their own land; but Hulot is a rough Christian, and he gave them—”

“Did you see the Gars?” she asked. “What sort of man is he?”

Her keen, malicious eyes never left the so-called vicomte’s face.

“Well, mademoiselle,” replied Merle, nettled at being always interrupted, “he is so like citizen du Gua, that if your friend did not wear the uniform of the École Polytechnique I could swear it was he.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil looked fixedly at the cold, impassible young man who had scorned her, but she saw nothing in him that betrayed the slightest feeling of alarm. She warned him by a bitter smile that she had now discovered the secret so treacherously kept; then in a jesting voice, her nostrils dilating with pleasure, and her head so turned that she could watch the young man and yet see Merle, she said to the Republican: “That new leader gives a great deal of anxiety to the First Consul. He is very daring, they say; but he has the weakness of rushing headlong into adventures, especially with women.”

“We are counting on that to get even with him,” said the captain. “If we catch him for only an hour we shall put a bullet in his head. He’ll do the same to us if he meets us, so *par pari*—”

“Oh!” said the *émigré*, “we have nothing to fear. Your soldiers cannot go as far as La Pèlerine, they are tired, and, if you consent, we can all rest a short distance from here. My mother stops at La Vivetière, the road to which turns off a few rods farther on.

These ladies might like to stop there too ; they must be tired with their long drive from Alençon without resting ; and as mademoiselle," he added, with forced politeness, "has had the generosity to give safety as well as pleasure to our journey, perhaps she will deign to accept a supper from my mother ; and I think, captain," he added, addressing Merle, "the times are not so bad but what we can find a barrel of cider for your men. The Gars can't have taken all, at least my mother thinks not —"

"Your mother?" said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, interrupting him in a tone of irony, and making no reply to his invitation.

"Does my age seem more improbable to you this evening, mademoiselle?" said Madame du Gua. "Unfortunately I was married very young, and my son was born when I was fifteen."

"Are you not mistaken, madame? — when you were thirty, perhaps."

Madame du Gua turned livid as she swallowed the sarcasm. She would have liked to revenge herself on the spot, but was forced to smile, for she was determined at any cost, even that of insult, to discover the nature of the feelings that actuated the young girl ; she therefore pretended not to have understood her.

"The Chouans have never had a more cruel leader than the Gars, if we are to believe the stories about him," she said, addressing herself vaguely to both Francine and her mistress.

"Oh, as for cruel, I don't believe that," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil ; "he knows how to lie, but he seems rather credulous himself. The leader of a party ought not to be the plaything of others."

"Do you know him?" asked the *émigré*, quietly.

"No," she replied, with a disdainful glance, "but I thought I did."

"Oh, mademoiselle, he's a *malin*, yes a *malin*," said Captain Merle, shaking his head and giving with an expressive gesture the peculiar meaning to the word which it had in those days but has since lost. "Those old families do sometimes send out vigorous shoots. He has just returned from a country where, they say, the *ci-devants* did n't find life too easy, and men ripen like medlars in the straw. If that fellow is really clever he can lead us a pretty dance. He has already formed companies of light infantry who oppose our troops and neutralize the efforts of the government. If we burn a royalist village he burns two of ours. He can hold an immense tract of country and force us to spread out our men at the very moment when we want them on one spot. Oh, he knows what he is about."

"He is cutting his country's throat," said Gérard in a loud voice, interrupting the captain.

"Then," said the *émigré*, "if his death would deliver the nation, why don't you catch him and shoot him?"

As he spoke he tried to look into the depths of Mademoiselle de Vernenil's soul, and one of those voiceless scenes the dramatic vividness and fleeting sagacity of which cannot be reproduced in language passed between them in a flash. Danger is always interesting. The worst criminal threatened with death excites pity. Though Mademoiselle de Verneuil was now certain that the lover who had cast her off was this very leader of the Chouans, she was not ready to verify her suspicions by giving him up; she had quite another curiosity to

satisfy. She preferred to doubt or to believe as her passion led her, and she now began deliberately to play with peril. Her eyes, full of scornful meaning, bade the young chief notice the soldiers of the escort; by thus presenting to his mind triumphantly an image of his danger she made him feel that his life depended on a word from her, and her lips seemed to quiver on the verge of pronouncing it. Like an American Indian, she watched every muscle of the face of her enemy, tied, as it were, to the stake, while she brandished her tomahawk gracefully, enjoying a revenge that was still innocent, and torturing like a mistress who still loves.

“If I had a son like yours, madame,” she said to Madame du Gua, who was visibly frightened, “I should wear mourning from the day when I had yielded him to danger; I should know no peace of mind.”

No answer was made to this speech. She turned her head repeatedly to the escort and then suddenly to Madame du Gua, without detecting the slightest secret signal between the lady and the Gars which might have confirmed her suspicions on the nature of their intimacy, which she longed to doubt. The young chief calmly smiled, and bore without flinching the scrutiny she forced him to undergo; his attitude and the expression of his face were those of a man indifferent to danger; he even seemed to say at times: “This is your chance to avenge your wounded vanity — take it! I have no desire to lessen my contempt for you.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil began to study the young man from the vantage-ground of her position with coolness and dignity; at the bottom of her heart she admired his courage and tranquillity. Happy in discovering that the man she loved bore an ancient title

(the distinctions of which please every woman), she also found pleasure in meeting him in their present situation, where, as champion of a cause ennobled by misfortune, he was fighting with all the faculties of a strong soul against a Republic that was constantly victorious. She rejoiced to see him brought face to face with danger, and still displaying the courage and bravery so powerful on a woman's heart; again and again she put him to the test, obeying perhaps the instinct which induces a woman to play with her victim as a cat plays with a mouse.

"By virtue of what law do you put the Chouans to death?" she said to Merle.

"That of the 14th of last Fructidor, which outlaws the insurgent departments and proclaims martial law," replied the Republican.

"May I ask why I have the honor to attract your eyes?" she said presently to the young chief, who was attentively watching her.

"Because of a feeling which a man of honor cannot express to any woman, no matter who she is," replied the Marquis de Montauran, in a low voice, bending down to her. "We live in times," he said aloud, "when women do the work of the executioner and wield the axe with even better effect."

She looked at de Montauran fixedly; then, delighted to be attacked by the man whose life she held in her hands, she said in a low voice, smiling softly: "Your head is a very poor one; the executioner does not want it; I shall keep it myself."

The marquis looked at the inexplicable girl, whose love had overcome all, even insult, and who now avenged herself by forgiving that which women are

said never to forgive. His eyes grew less stern, less cold; a look of sadness came upon his face. His love was stronger than he suspected. Mademoiselle de Verneuil, satisfied with these faint signs of a desired reconciliation, glanced at him tenderly, with a smile that was like a kiss; then she leaned back once more in the carriage, determined not to risk the future of this happy drama, believing she had assured it with her smile. She was so beautiful! She knew so well how to conquer all obstacles to love! She was so accustomed to take all risks and push on at all hazards! She loved the unexpected, and the tumults of life — why should she fear?

Before long the carriage, under the young chief's directions, left the highway and took a road cut between banks planted with apple-trees, more like a ditch than a roadway, which led to La Vivetière. The carriage now advanced rapidly, leaving the escort to follow slowly towards the manor-house, the gray roofs of which appeared and disappeared among the trees. Some of the men lingered on the way to knock the stiff clay of the road-bed from their shoes.

“This is devilishly like the road to Paradise,” remarked Beau-Pied.

Thanks to the impatience of the postilion, Mademoiselle de Verneuil soon saw the château of La Vivetière. This house, standing at the end of a sort of promontory, was protected and surrounded by two deep lakelets, and could be reached only by a narrow causeway. That part of the little peninsula on which the house and gardens were placed was still further protected by a moat filled with water from the two lakes which it connected. The house really stood on an island that was

well-nigh impregnable, — an invaluable retreat for a chieftain, who could be surprised there only by treachery.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil put her head out of the carriage as she heard the rusty hinges of the great gates open to give entrance to an arched portal which had been much injured during the late war. The gloomy colors of the scene which met her eyes almost extinguished the thoughts of love and coquetry in which she had been indulging. The carriage entered a large courtyard that was nearly square, bordered on each side by the steep banks of the lakelets. Those sterile shores, washed by the water, which was covered with large green patches, had no other ornament than aquatic trees devoid of foliage, the twisted trunks and hoary heads of which, rising from the reeds and rushes, gave them a certain grotesque likeness to gigantic marmosets. These ugly growths seemed to waken and talk to each other when the frogs deserted them with much croaking, and the water-fowl, startled by the sound of the wheels, flew low upon the surface of the pools. The courtyard, full of rank and seeded grasses, reeds, and shrubs, either dwarf or parasite, excluded all impression of order or of splendor. The house appeared to have been long abandoned. The roof seemed to bend beneath the weight of the various vegetations which grew upon it. The walls, though built of the smooth, slaty stone which abounds in that region, showed many rifts and chinks where ivy had fastened its rootlets. Two main buildings, joined at the angle by a tall tower which faced the lake, formed the whole of the château, the doors and swinging, rotten shutters, rusty balustrades, and broken windows of which seemed

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ready to fall at the first tempest. The north wind whistled through these ruins, to which the moon, with her indefinite light, gave the character and outline of a great spectre. But the colors of those gray-blue granites, mingling with the black and tawny schists, must have been seen in order to understand how vividly a spectral image was suggested by the empty and gloomy carcass of the building. Its disjointed stones and paneless windows, the battered tower and broken roofs gave it the aspect of a skeleton; the birds of prey which flew from it, shrieking, added another feature to this vague resemblance. A few tall pine-trees standing behind the house waved their dark foliage above the roof, and several yews cut into formal shapes at the angles of the building, festooned it gloomily like the ornaments on a hearse. The style of the doors, the coarseness of the decorations, the want of harmony in the architecture, were all characteristic of the feudal manors of which Brittany was proud; perhaps justly proud, for they maintained upon that Gaelic ground a species of monumental history of the nebulous period which preceded the establishment of the French monarchy.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil, to whose imagination the word "château" brought none but its conventional ideas, was affected by the funereal aspect of the scene. She sprang from the carriage and stood apart gazing at it in terror, and debating within herself what action she ought to take. Francine heard Madame du Gua give a sigh of relief as she felt herself in safety beyond reach of the Blues; an exclamation escaped her when the gates were closed, and she saw the carriage and its occupants within the walls of this natural fortress.

The Marquis de Montauran turned hastily to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, divining the thoughts that crowded on her mind.

"This château," he said, rather sadly, "was ruined by the war, just as my plans for our happiness have been ruined by you."

"How ruined?" she asked in surprise.

"Are you indeed 'beautiful, brilliant, and of noble birth'?" he asked ironically, repeating the words she had herself used in their former conversation.

"Who has told you to the contrary?"

"Friends, in whom I put faith; who care for my safety and are on the watch against treachery."

"Treachery!" she exclaimed, in a sarcastic tone. "Have you forgotten Hulot and Alençon already? You have no memory,—a dangerous defect in the leader of a party. But if friends," she added with increased sarcasm, "are so all-powerful in your heart, keep your friends. Nothing is comparable to the joys of friendship. Adieu; neither I nor the soldiers of the Republic will stop here."

She turned towards the gateway with a look of wounded pride and scorn, and her motions as she did so displayed a dignity and also a despair which changed in an instant the thoughts of the young man; he felt that the cost of relinquishing his desires was too great, and he gave himself up deliberately to imprudence and credulity. He loved; and the lovers had no desire now to quarrel with each other.

"Say but one word and I will believe you," he said, in a supplicating voice.

"One word?" she answered, closing her lips tightly, "not a single word; not even a gesture."

"At least, be angry with me," he entreated, trying to take the hand she withheld from him, — "that is, if you dare to be angry with the leader of the rebels, who is now as sad and distrustful as he was lately happy and confiding."

Marie gave him a look that was far from angry, and he added: "You have my secret, but I have not yours."

The alabaster brow appeared to darken at these words; she cast a look of annoyance on the young chieftain, and answered, hastily: "Tell you my secret? Never!"

In love every word, every glance has the eloquence of the moment; but on this occasion Mademoiselle de Verneuil's exclamation revealed nothing, and, clever as Montauran might be, its secret was impenetrable to him, though the tones of her voice betrayed some extraordinary and unusual emotion which piqued his curiosity.

"You have a singular way of dispelling suspicion," he said.

"Do you still suspect me?" she replied, looking him in the eye, as if to say, "What rights have you over me?"

"Mademoiselle," said the young man, in a voice that was submissive and yet firm, "the authority you exercise over Republican troops, this escort—"

"Ah, that reminds me! My escort and I," she asked, in a slightly satirical tone, "your protectors, in short, — will they be safe here?"

"Yes, on the word of a gentleman. Whoever you be, you and your party have nothing to fear in my house."

The promise was made with so loyal and generous an air and manner that Mademoiselle de Verneuil felt absolutely secure as to the safety of the Republican soldiers. She was about to speak when Madame du Gua's approach silenced her. That lady had either overheard or guessed part of their conversation, and was filled with anxiety at no longer perceiving any signs of animosity between them. As soon as the marquis caught sight of her, he offered his hand to Mademoiselle de Verneuil and led her hastily towards the house, as if to escape an undesired companion.

"I am in their way," thought Madame du Gua, remaining where she was. She watched the lovers walking slowly towards the portico, where they stopped, as if satisfied to have placed some distance between themselves and her. "Yes, yes, I am in their way," she repeated, speaking to herself; "but before long that creature will not be in mine; the lake, God willing, shall have her. I'll help him keep his word as a gentleman; once under the water, she has nothing to fear, — what can be safer than that?"

She was looking fixedly at the still mirror of the little lake to the right when she suddenly heard a rustling among the rushes, and saw in the moonlight the face of Marche-à-Terre rising behind the gnarled trunk of an old willow. None but those who knew the Chouan well could have distinguished him from the tangle of branches of which he seemed a part. Madame du Gua looked about her with some distrust; she saw the postilion leading his horses to a stable in the wing of the château which was opposite to the bank where Marche-à-Terre was hiding; Francine, with her back to her, was going towards the two lovers, who at

that moment had forgotten the whole earth. Madame du Gua, with a finger on her lip to demand silence, walked towards the Chouan, who guessed rather than heard her question, "How many of you are here?"

"Eighty-seven."

"They are sixty-five; I counted them."

"Good," said the savage, with sullen satisfaction.

Attentive to all Francine's movements, the Chouan disappeared behind the willow, as he saw her turn to look for the enemy over whom she was keeping an instinctive watch.

Six or eight persons, attracted by the noise of the carriage-wheels, came out on the portico, shouting: "It is the Gars! it is he; here he is!" On this several other men ran out, and their coming interrupted the lovers. The Marquis de Montauran went hastily up to them, making an imperative gesture for silence, and pointing to the farther end of the causeway, where the Republican escort was just appearing. At the sight of the well-known blue uniforms with red facings, and the glittering bayonets, the amazed conspirators called out hastily, "You have surely not betrayed us?"

"If I had, I should not warn you," said the marquis, smiling bitterly. "Those Blues," he added, after a pause, "are the escort of this young lady, whose generosity has delivered us, almost miraculously, from a danger we were in at Alençon. I will tell you about it later. Mademoiselle and her escort are here in safety, on my word as a gentleman, and we must all receive them as friends."

Madame du Gua and Francine were now on the portico; the marquis offered his hand to Mademoiselle

de Verneuil, the group of gentlemen parted in two lines to allow them to pass, endeavoring, as they did so, to catch sight of the young lady's features; for Madame du Gua, who was following behind, excited their curiosity by secret signs.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil saw, with surprise, that a large table was set in the first hall, for about twenty guests. The dining-room opened into a vast salon, where the whole party were presently assembled. These rooms were in keeping with the dilapidated appearance of the outside of the house. The walnut panels, polished by age, but rough and coarse in design and badly executed, were loose in their places and ready to fall. Their dingy color added to the gloom of these apartments, which were barren of curtains and mirrors; a few venerable bits of furniture in the last stages of decay alone remained, and harmonized with the general destruction. Marie noticed maps and plans stretched out upon long tables, and in the corners of the room a quantity of weapons and stacked carbines. These things bore witness, though she did not know it, to an important conference between the leaders of the Vendéans and those of the Chouans.

The marquis led Mademoiselle de Verneuil to a large and worm-eaten armchair placed beside the fireplace; Francine followed and stood behind her mistress, leaning on the back of that ancient bit of furniture.

"You will allow me for a moment to play the part of master of the house," he said, leaving the two women and mingling with the groups of his other guests.

Francine saw the gentlemen hasten, after a few words from Montauran, to hide their weapons, maps, and whatever else might arouse the suspicions of the Re-

publican officers. Some took off their broad leather belts containing pistols and hunting-knives. The marquis requested them to show the utmost prudence, and went himself to see to the reception of the troublesome guests whom fate had bestowed upon him.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who had raised her feet to the fire and was now warming them, did not turn her head as Montauran left the room, thus disappointing those present, who were anxious to see her. Francine alone saw the change produced on the company by the departure of the young chief. The gentlemen gathered hastily round Madame du Gua, and during a conversation carried on in an undertone between them, they all turned several times to look curiously at the stranger.

"You know Montauran," Madame du Gua said to them; "he has fallen in love with that worthless girl, and, as you can easily understand, he thinks all my warnings selfish. Our friends in Paris, Messieurs de Valois and d'Esgrignon, have warned him of a trap set for him by throwing some such creature at his head; but in spite of this he allows himself to be fooled by the first woman he meets, — a girl who, if my information is correct, has stolen a great name only to disgrace it."

The speaker, in whom our readers have already recognized the lady who instigated the attack on the "turgotine," may be allowed to keep the name which she used to escape the dangers that threatened her in Alençon. The publication of her real name would only mortify a noble family already deeply afflicted at the misconduct of this woman; whose history, by the bye, has already been given on another scene.

The curiosity manifested by the company of men soon became impertinent and almost hostile. A few

harsh words reached Francine's ear, and after a word said to her mistress the girl retreated into the embrasure of a window. Marie rose, turned towards the insolent group, and gave them a look full of dignity and even disdain. Her beauty, the elegance of her manners, and her pride changed the behavior of her enemies, and won her the flattering murmur which escaped their lips. Two or three men, whose outward appearance seemed to denote the habits of polite society and the gallantry acquired in courts, came towards her; but her propriety of demeanor forced them to respect her, and none dared speak to her; so that, instead of being herself arraigned by the company, it was she who appeared to judge of them. These chiefs of a war undertaken for God and the king bore very little resemblance to the portraits her fancy had drawn of them. The struggle, really great in itself, shrank to mean proportions as she observed these provincial noblemen, all, with one or two vigorous exceptions, devoid of significance and virility. Having made to herself a poem of such heroes, Marie suddenly awakened to the truth. Their faces expressed to her eyes more a love of scheming than a love of glory; self-interest had evidently put arms into their hands. Still, it must be said that these men did become heroic when brought into action. The loss of her illusions made Mademoiselle de Verneuil unjust, and prevented her from recognizing the real devotion which rendered several of these men remarkable. It is true that most of those now present were commonplace. A few original and marked faces appeared among them, but even these were belittled by the artificiality and the etiquette of aristocracy. If Marie generously granted intellect and perception to the latter, she also discerned

in them a total absence of the simplicity, the grandeur, to which she had been accustomed among the triumphant men of the Republic. This nocturnal assemblage in the old ruined castle made her smile; the scene seemed symbolic of the monarchy. But the thought came to her with delight that the marquis at least played a noble part among these men, whose only remaining merit in her eyes was devotion to a lost cause. She pictured her lover's face upon the background of this company, rejoicing to see it stand forth among those paltry and puny figures who were but the instruments of his great designs.

The footsteps of the marquis were heard in the adjoining room. Instantly the company separated into little groups and the whisperings ceased. Like school-boys who have plotted mischief in the master's absence, they hurriedly became silent and orderly. Montauran entered. Marie had the happiness of admiring him among his fellows, of whom he was the youngest, the handsomest, and the chief. Like a king in his court, he went from group to group, distributing looks and nods and words of encouragement or warning, with pressure of the hands and smiles; doing his duty as leader of a party with a grace and self-possession hardly to be expected in the young man whom Marie had so lately accused of heedlessness.

The presence of the marquis put an end to the open curiosity bestowed on Mademoiselle de Verneuil, but Madame du Gua's scandalous suggestions bore fruit. The Baron du Guénic, familiarly called "l'Intimé," who by rank and name had the best right among those present to treat Montauran familiarly, took the young leader by the arm and led him apart.

“My dear marquis,” he said; “we are much disturbed at seeing you on the point of committing an amazing folly.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“Do you know where that girl comes from, who she is, and what her schemes about you are?”

“Don’t trouble yourself, my dear Intimé; between you and me my fancy for her will be over to-morrow.”

“Yes; but suppose that creature betrays you to-night?”

“I’ll answer that when you tell me why she has not done it already,” said Montauran, assuming with a laugh an air of conceit. “My dear fellow, look at that charming girl, watch her manners, and dare to tell me she is not a woman of distinction. If she gave you a few favorable looks would n’t you feel at the bottom of your soul a respect for her? A certain lady has prejudiced you. I will tell you this: if she were the lost creature our friends are trying to make her out, I would, after what she and I have said to each other, kill her myself.”

“Do you suppose,” said Madame du Gua, joining them, “that Fouché is fool enough to send you a common prostitute out of the streets? He has provided seductions according to your deserts. You may choose to be blind, but your friends are keeping their eyes open to protect you.”

“Madame,” replied the Gars, his eyes flashing with anger, “be warned; take no steps against that lady, nor against her escort; if you do, nothing shall save you from my vengeance. I choose that Mademoiselle de Verneuil be treated with the utmost respect, and as a lady belonging to my family. We are, I believe, related to the de Verneuils.”

The opposition the marquis was made to feel produced the usual effect of such obstacles on all young men. Though he had, apparently, treated Mademoiselle de Verneuil rather lightly, and left it to be supposed that his passion for her was a mere caprice, he now, from a feeling of pride, made immense strides in his relation to her. By openly protecting her, his honor became concerned in compelling respect to her person; and he went from group to group assuring his friends, in the tone of a man whom it was dangerous to contradict, that the lady was really Mademoiselle de Verneuil. The doubts and gossip ceased at once. As soon as Montauran felt that harmony was restored and anxiety allayed, he returned to his mistress eagerly, saying in a low voice: —

“Those mischievous people have robbed me of an hour’s happiness.”

“I am glad you have come back to me,” she said, smiling. “I warn you that I am inquisitive; therefore you must not get tired of my questions. Tell me, in the first place, who is that worthy in a green cloth jacket?”

“That is the famous Major Brigaut, a man from the Marais, a comrade of the late Mercier, called La Vendée.”

“And that fat priest with the red face to whom he is talking at this moment about me?” she went on.

“Do you want to know what they are saying?”

“Do I want to know it? What a useless question!”

“But I could not tell it without offending you.”

“If you allow me to be insulted in your house without avenging me, marquis, adieu!” she said. “I will not stay another moment. I have some qualms already

about deceiving those poor Republicans, loyal and confiding as they are!"

She made a few hasty steps; the marquis followed her.

"Dear Marie, listen to me. On my honor, I have silenced their evil speaking, without knowing whether it was false or true. But, placed as I am, if friends whom we have in all the ministries in Paris warn me to beware of every woman I meet, and assure me that Fouché has employed against me a Judith of the streets, it is not unnatural that my best friends here should think you too beautiful to be an honest woman."

As he spoke the marquis plunged a glance into Mademoiselle de Verneuil's eyes. She colored, and was unable to restrain her tears.

"I deserve these insults," she said. "I wish you really thought me that despicable creature and still loved me; then, indeed, I could no longer doubt you. I believed in you when you were deceiving me, and you will not believe me now when I am true. Let us make an end of this, monsieur," she said, frowning, but turning pale as death, — "adieu!"

She rushed towards the dining-room with a movement of despair.

"Marie, my life is yours," said the young marquis in her ear.

She stopped short and looked at him.

"No, no," she said, "I will be generous. Farewell. In coming with you here I did not think of my past nor of your future — I was beside myself."

"You cannot mean that you will leave me now when I offer you my life?"

"You offer it in a moment of passion — of desire."

"I offer it without regret, and forever," he replied.

She returned to the room they had left. Hiding his emotions the marquis continued the conversation.

"That fat priest whose name you asked is the Abbé Gudin, a Jesuit, obstinate enough — perhaps I ought to say devoted enough, — to remain in France in spite of the decree of 1793, which banished his order. He is the firebrand of the war in these regions and a propagandist of the religious association called the *Sacré-Cœur*. Trained to use religion as an instrument, he persuades his followers that if they are killed they will be brought to life again, and he knows how to rouse their fanaticism by shrewd sermons. You see, it is necessary to work upon every man's selfish interests to attain a great end. That is the secret of all political success."

"And that vigorous, muscular old man, with the repulsive face, who is he? I mean the one in the ragged gown of a barrister."

"Barrister! he aspires to be considered a brigadier-general. Did you never hear of de Longuy?"

"Is that he!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Verneuil, horrified. "You employ such men as that?"

"Hush! he'll hear you. Do you see that other man in malignant conversation with Madame du Gua?"

"The one in black who looks like a judge?"

"That is one of our go-betweens, La Billardière, son of a councillor to the Breton Parliament, whose real name is something like Flamet; he is in close correspondence with the princes."

"And his neighbor? the one who is just putting up his white clay pipe, and uses all the fingers of his right hand to snap the box, like a countryman."

“By Jove, you are right; he was game-keeper to the deceased husband of that lady, and now commands one of the companies I send against the Republican militia. He and Marche-à-Terre are the two most conscientious vassals the king has here.”

“But she — who is she?”

“Charette’s last mistress,” replied the marquis.
“She wields great influence over all these people.”

“Is she faithful to his memory?”

For all answer the marquis gave a dubious smile.

“Do you think well of her?”

“You are very inquisitive.”

“She is my enemy because she can no longer be my rival,” said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, laughing. “I forgive her her past errors if she forgives mine. Who is that officer with the long moustache?”

“Permit me not to name him; he wants to get rid of the First Consul by assassination. Whether he succeeds or not you will hear of him. He is certain to become famous.”

“And you have come here to command such men as these!” she exclaimed in horror. “Are *they* the king’s defenders? Where are the gentlemen and the great lords?”

“Where?” said the marquis, coolly, “they are in all the courts of Europe. Who else should win over kings and cabinets and armies to serve the Bourbon cause and hurl them at that Republic which threatens monarchies and social order with death and destruction?”

“Ah!” she said, with generous emotion, “be to me henceforth the source from which I draw the ideas I must still acquire about your cause — I consent. But let me still remember that you are the only noble who

does his duty in fighting France with Frenchmen, without the help of foreigners. I am a woman ; I feel that if my child struck me in anger I could forgive him ; but if he saw me beaten by a stranger and consented to it, I should regard him as a monster."

"You shall remain a Republican," said the marquis, in the ardor produced by the generous words which confirmed his hopes.

"Republican ! no, I am that no longer. I could not now respect you if you submitted to the First Consul," she replied. "But neither do I like to see you at the head of men who are pillaging a corner of France, instead of making war against the whole Republic. For whom are you fighting ? What do you expect of a king restored to his throne by your efforts ? A woman did that great thing once, and the liberated king allowed her to be burned. Such men are the anointed of the Lord, and there is danger in meddling with sacred things. Let God take care of his own, and place, displace, and replace them on their purple seats. But if you have counted the cost, and seen the poor return that will come to you, you are tenfold greater in my eyes than I thought you —"

"Ah ! you are bewitching. Don't attempt to indoctrinate my followers, or I shall be left without a man."

"If you would let me convert you, only you," she said, "we might live happily a thousand leagues away from all this."

"These men whom you seem to despise," said the marquis, in a graver tone, "will know how to die when the struggle comes, and all their misdeeds will be forgotten. Besides, if my efforts are crowned with some success, the laurel leaves of victory will hide all."

“I see no one but you who is risking anything.”

“You are mistaken; I am not the only one,” he replied, with true modesty. “See, over there, the new leaders from La Vendée. The first, whom you must have heard of as ‘Le Grand Jacques,’ is the Comte de Fontaine; the other is La Billardière, whom I mentioned to you just now.”

“Have you forgotten Quiberon, where La Billardière played so equivocal a part?” she said, struck by a sudden recollection.

“La Billardière took a great deal upon himself. Serving princes is far from lying on a bed of roses.”

“Ah! you make me shudder!” cried Marie. “Marquis,” she continued, in a tone which seemed to indicate some mysterious personal reticence, “a single instant suffices to destroy illusions and to betray secrets on which the life and happiness of many may depend—” she stopped, as though she feared she had said too much; then she added, in another tone, “I wish I could be sure that those Republican soldiers were in safety.”

“I will be prudent,” he said, smiling to disguise his emotion; “but say no more about your soldiers; have I not answered for their safety on my word as a gentleman?”

“And after all,” she said, “what right have I to dictate to you? Be my master henceforth. Did I not tell you it would drive me to despair to rule a slave?”

“Monsieur le marquis,” said Major Brigaut, respectfully, interrupting the conversation, “how long are the Blues to remain here?”

“They will leave as soon as they are rested,” said Marie.

The marquis looked about the room and noticed the

agitation of those present. He left *Mademoiselle de Verneuil*, and his place beside her was at once taken by *Madame du Gua*, whose smiling and treacherous face was in no way disconcerted by the young chief's bitter smile. Just then *Francine*, standing by the window, gave a stifled cry. *Marie*, noticing with amazement that the girl left the room, looked at *Madame du Gua*, and her surprise increased as she saw the pallor on the face of her enemy. Anxious to discover the meaning of *Francine's* abrupt departure, she went to the window, where *Madame du Gua* followed her, no doubt to guard against any suspicions which might arise in her mind. They returned together to the chimney, after each had cast a look upon the shore and the lake, — *Marie* without seeing anything that could have caused *Francine's* flight, *Madame du Gua* seeing that which satisfied her she was being obeyed.

The lake, at the edge of which *Marche-à-Terre* had shown his head, where *Madame du Gua* had seen him, joined the moat in misty curves, sometimes broad as ponds, in other places narrow as the artificial streamlets of a park. The steep bank, washed by its waters, lay a few rods from the window. *Francine*, watching on the surface of the water the black lines thrown by the willows, noticed, carelessly at first, the uniform trend of their branches, caused by a light breeze then prevailing. Suddenly she thought she saw against the glassy surface a figure moving with the spontaneous and irregular motion of life. The form, vague as it was, seemed to her that of a man. At first she attributed what she saw to the play of the moonlight upon the foliage, but presently a second head appeared, then several others in the distance. The shrubs upon the bank

were bent and then violently straightened, and Francine saw the long hedge undulating like one of those great Indian serpents of fabulous size and shape. Here and there, among the gorse and taller brambles, points of light could be seen to come and go. The girl's attention redoubled, and she thought she recognized the foremost of the dusky figures; indistinct as its outlines were, the beating of her heart convinced her it was no other than her lover, Marche-à-Terre. Eager to know if this mysterious approach meant treachery, she ran to the courtyard. When she reached the middle of its grass plot she looked alternately at the two wings of the building and along the steep shores, without discovering, on the inhabited side of the house, any sign of this silent approach. She listened attentively and heard a slight rustling, like that which might be made by the footfalls of some wild animal in the silence of the forest. She quivered, but did not tremble. Though young and innocent, her anxious curiosity suggested a ruse. She saw the coach and slipped into it, putting out her head to listen, with the caution of a hare giving ear to the sound of the distant hunters. She saw Pille-Miche come out of the stable, accompanied by two peasants, all three carrying bales of straw; these they spread on the ground in a way to form a long bed of litter before the inhabited wing of the house, parallel with the bank, bordered by dwarf trees.

"You're spreading straw as if you thought they'd sleep here! Enough, Pille-Miche, enough!" said a low, gruff voice, which Francine recognized.

"And won't they sleep here?" returned Pille-Miche with a laugh. "I'm afraid the Gars will be angry!" he added, too low for Francine to hear.

“Well, let him,” said Marche-à-Terre, in the same tone, “we shall have killed the Blues anyway. Here’s that coach, which you and I had better put up.”

Pille-Miche pulled the carriage by the pole and Marche-à-Terre pushed it by one of the wheels with such force that Francine was in the barn and about to be locked up there before she had time to reflect on her situation. Pille-Miche went out to fetch the barrel of cider, which the marquis had ordered for the escort; and Marche-à-Terre was passing along the side of the coach, to leave the barn and close the door, when he was stopped by a hand which caught and held the long hair of his goatskin. He recognized a pair of eyes the gentleness of which exercised a power of magnetism over him, and he stood stock-still for a moment under their spell. Francine sprang from the carriage, and said, in the nervous voice of an excited woman: “Pierre, what news did you give to that lady and her son on the road? What is going on here? Why are you hiding? I must know all.”

These words brought a look on the Chouan’s face which Francine had never seen there before. The Breton led his innocent mistress to the door; there he turned her towards the blanching light of the moon, and answered, as he looked in her face with terrifying eyes: “Yes, by my damnation, Francine, I will tell you, but not until you have sworn on these beads (and he pulled an old chaplet from beneath his goatskin)—on this relic, which *you know well*,” he continued, “to answer me truly one question.”

Francine colored as she saw the chaplet, which was no doubt a token of their love. “It was on that,” he added, much agitated, “that you swore —”

He did not finish the sentence. The young girl placed her hand on the lips of her savage lover and silenced him.

“Need I swear?” she said.

He took his mistress gently by the hand, looked at her for a moment and said: “Is the lady you are with really *Mademoiselle de Verneuil*?”

Francine stood with hanging arms, her eyelids lowered, her head bowed, pale and speechless.

“She is a strumpet!” cried *Marche-à-Terre*, in a terrifying voice.

At the word the pretty hand once more covered his lips, but this time he sprang back violently. The girl no longer saw a lover; he had turned to a wild beast in all the fury of its nature. His eyebrows were drawn together, his lips drew apart, and he showed his teeth like a dog which defends its master.

“I left you pure, and I find-you muck. Ha! why did I ever leave you! You are here to betray us; to deliver up the Gars!”

These sentences sounded more like roars than words. Though Francine was frightened, she raised her angelic eyes at this last accusation and answered calmly, as she looked into his savage face: “I will pledge my eternal safety that that is false. That’s an idea of the lady you are serving.”

He lowered his head; then she took his hand and nestling to him with a pretty movement said: “Pierre, what is all this to you and me? I don’t know what you understand about it, but I can’t make it out. Recollect one thing: that noble and beautiful young lady has been my benefactress; she is also yours—we live together like two sisters. No harm must ever

come to her where we are, you and I—in our lifetime at least. Swear it! I trust no one here but you.”

“I don’t command here,” said the Chouan, in a surly tone.

His face darkened. She caught his long ears and twisted them gently as if playing with a cat.

“At least,” she said, seeing that he looked less stern, “promise me to use all the power you have to protect our benefactress.”

He shook his head as if he doubted of success, and the motion made her tremble. At this critical moment the escort was entering the courtyard. The tread of the soldiers and the rattle of their weapons awoke the echoes and seemed to put an end to Marche-à-Terre’s indecision.

“Perhaps I can save her,” he said, “if you make her stay in the house. And mind,” he added, “whatever happens, you must stay with her and keep silence; if not, no safety.”

“I promise it,” she replied in terror.

“Very good; then go in—go in at once, and hide your fears from every one, even your mistress.”

“Yes.”

She pressed his hand; he stood a moment watching her with an almost paternal air as she ran with the lightness of a bird up the portico; then he slipped behind the bushes, like an actor darting behind the scenes as the curtain rises on a tragedy.

“Do you know, Merle,” said Gérard as they reached the château, “that this place looks to me like a mousetrap?”

“So I think,” said the captain, anxiously.

The two officers hastened to post sentinels to guard

the gate and the causeway; then they examined with great distrust the precipitous banks of the lakes and the surroundings of the château.

"Pooh!" said Merle, "we must do one of two things: either trust ourselves in this barrack with perfect confidence, or else not enter it at all."

' "Come, let's go in," replied Gérard.

The soldiers, released at the word of command, hastened to stack their muskets in conical sheaves, and to form a sort of line before the litter of straw, in the middle of which was the promised barrel of cider. They then divided into groups, to whom two peasants began to distribute butter and rye-bread. The marquis appeared in the portico to welcome the officers and take them to the salon. As Gérard went up the steps he looked at both ends of the portico, where some venerable larches spread their black branches; and he called up Clef-des-Cœurs and Beau-Pied.

"You will each reconnoitre the gardens and search the bushes, and post a sentry before your line."

"May we light our fire before starting, adjutant?" asked Clef-des-Cœurs.

Gérard nodded.

"There! you see, Clef-des-Cœurs," said Beau-Pied, "the adjutant's wrong to run himself into this wasp's-nest. If Hulot was in command we should n't be cornered here — in a saucepan!"

"What a stupid you are!" replied Clef-des-Cœurs, "have n't you guessed, you knave of tricks, that this is the home of the beauty our jovial Merle has been whistling round? He'll marry her to a certainty — that's as clear as a well-rubbed bayonet. A woman like that will do honor to the brigade."

"True for you," replied Beau-Pied, "and you may add that she gives pretty good cider — but I can't drink it in peace till I know what's behind those devilish hedges. I always remember poor Larose and Vieux-Chapeau rolling down the ditch at La Pèlerine. I shall recollect Larose's queue to the end of my days; it went hammering down like the knocker of a front door."

"Beau-Pied, my friend; you have too much imagination for a soldier; you ought to be making songs at the national Institute."

"If I've too much imagination," retorted Beau-Pied, "you have n't any; it will take you some time to get your degree as consul."

A general laugh put an end to the discussion, for Clef-des-Cœurs found no suitable reply in his pouch with which to floor his adversary.

"Come and make our rounds; I'll go to the right," said Beau-Pied.

"Very good, I'll take the left," replied his comrade. "But stop one minute, I must have a glass of cider; my throat is glued together like the oiled-silk of Hulot's best hat."

The left bank of the gardens, which Clef-des-Cœurs thus delayed searching at once, was, unhappily, the dangerous slope where Francine had seen the moving line of men. All things go by chance in war.

As Gérard entered the salon and bowed to the company he cast a penetrating eye on the men who were present. Suspicions came forcibly to his mind, and he went at once to Mademoiselle de Verneuil and said in a low voice: "I think you had better leave this place immediately. We are not safe here."

"What can you fear while I am with you?" she an-

swered, laughing. "You are safer here than you would be at Mayenne."

A woman answers for her lover in good faith. The two officers were reassured. The party now moved into the dining-room after some discussion about a guest, apparently of some importance, who had not appeared. Mademoiselle de Verneuil was able, thanks to the silence which always reigns at the beginning of a meal, to give some attention to the character of the assemblage, which was curious enough under existing circumstances. One thing struck her with surprise. The Republican officers seemed superior to the rest of the assembly by reason of their dignified appearance. Their long hair tied behind in a queue drew lines beside their foreheads which gave, in those days, an expression of great candor and nobleness to young heads. Their threadbare blue uniforms with the shabby red facings, even their epaulets flung back behind their shoulders (a sign throughout the army, even among the leaders, of a lack of overcoats), — all these things brought the two Republican officers into strong relief against the men who surrounded them.

"Oh, they are the Nation, and that means liberty!" thought Marie; then, with a glance at the royalists, she added, "on the other side is a man, a king, and privileges." She could not refrain from admiring Merle, so thoroughly did that gay soldier respond to the ideas she had formed of the French trooper who hums a tune when the balls are whistling, and jests when a comrade falls. Gérard was more imposing. Grave and self-possessed, he seemed to have one of those truly Republican spirits which, in the days of which we write, crowded the French armies, and gave them, by means of these noble indi-

vidual devotions, an energy they had never before possessed. "That is one of my men with great ideals," thought Mademoiselle de Verneuil. "Relying on the present, which they rule, they destroy the past for the benefit of the future."

The thought saddened her because she could not apply it to her lover; towards whom she now turned, to discard by a different admiration, these beliefs in the Republic she was already beginning to dislike. Looking at the marquis, surrounded by men who were bold enough, fanatical enough, and sufficiently long-headed as to the future to give battle to a victorious Republic in the hope of restoring a dead monarchy, a proscribed religion, fugitive princes, and lost privileges, "He," thought she, "has no less an aim than the others; clinging to those fragments, he wants to make a future from the past." Her mind, thus grasped by conflicting images, hesitated between the new and the old wrecks. Her conscience told her that the one was fighting for a man, the other for a country; but she had now reached, through her feelings, the point to which reason will also bring us, namely: to a recognition that the king *is* the Nation.

The steps of a man echoed in the adjoining room, and the marquis rose from the table to greet him. He proved to be the expected guest, and seeing the assembled company he was about to speak, when the Gars made him a hasty sign, which he concealed from the Republicans, to take his place and say nothing. The more the two officers analyzed the faces about them, the more their suspicions increased. The clerical dress of the Abbé Gudin and the singularity of the Chouan garments were so many warnings to them; they redoubled

their watchfulness, and soon discovered many discrepancies between the manners of the guests and the topics of their conversation. The republicanism of some was quite as exaggerated as the aristocratic bearing of others was unmistakable. Certain glances which they detected between the marquis and his guests, certain words of double meaning imprudently uttered, but above all the fringe of beard which was round the necks of several of the men and was very ill-concealed by their cravats, brought the officers at last to a full conviction of the truth, which flashed upon their minds at the same instant. They gave each other one look, for Madame du Gua had cleverly separated them and they could only impart their thoughts by their eyes. Such a situation demanded the utmost caution. They did not know whether they and their men were masters of the situation, or whether they had been drawn into a trap, or whether Mademoiselle de Verneuil was the dupe or the accomplice of this inexplicable state of things. But an unforeseen event precipitated a crisis before they had fully recognized the gravity of their situation.

The new guest was one of those solid men who are square at the base and square at the shoulders, with ruddy skins ; men who lean backward when they walk, seeming to displace much atmosphere about them, and who appear to think that more than one glance of the eye is needful to take them in. Notwithstanding his rank, he had taken life as a joke from which he was to get as much amusement as possible ; and yet, although he knelt at his own shrine only, he was kind, polite, and witty, after the fashion of those noblemen who, having finished their training at court, return to live on their estates, and never suspect that they have, at the

end of twenty years, grown rusty. Men of this type fail in tact with imperturbable coolness, talk folly wittily, distrust good with extreme shrewdness, and take incredible pains to fall into traps.

When, by a play of his knife and fork which proclaimed him a good feeder, he had made up for lost time, he began to look round on the company. His astonishment was great when he observed the two Republican officers, and he questioned Madame du Gua with a look, while she, for all answer, showed him Mademoiselle de Verneuil in the same way. When he saw the siren whose demeanor had silenced the suspicions Madame du Gua had excited among the guests, the face of the stout stranger broke into one of those insolent, satirical smiles which contain a whole history of scandal. He leaned to his next neighbor and whispered a few words, which went from ear to ear and lip to lip, passing Marie and the two officers, until they reached the heart of one whom they struck to death. The leaders of the Vendéans and the Chouans assembled round that table looked at the Marquis de Montauran with cruel curiosity. The eyes of Madame du Gua, flashing with joy, turned from the marquis to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who was speechless with surprise. The Republican officers, uneasy in mind, questioned each other's thoughts as they awaited the result of this extraordinary scene. In a moment the forks remained inactive in every hand, silence reigned, and every eye was turned to the Gars. A frightful anger showed upon his face, which turned waxen in tone. He leaned towards the guest from whom the rocket had started and said, in a voice that seemed muffled in crape, "Death of my soul! count, is that true?"

“On my honor,” said the count, bowing gravely.

The marquis lowered his eyes for a moment, then he raised them and looked fixedly at Marie, who, watchful of his struggle, knew that look to be her death-warrant.

“I would give my life,” he said in a low voice, “for revenge on the spot.”

Madame du Gua understood the words from the mere movement of the young man’s lips, and she smiled upon him as we smile at a friend whose regrets are about to cease. The scorn felt for Mademoiselle de Verneuil and shown on every face, brought to its height the growing indignation of the two Republicans, who now rose hastily : —

“Do you want anything, citizens?” asked Madame du Gua.

“Our swords, *citoyenne*,” said Gérard, sarcastically.

“You do not need them at table,” said the marquis, coldly.

“No, but we are going to play at a game you know very well,” replied Gérard. “This is La Pèlerine over again.”

The whole party seemed dumfounded. Just then a volley, fired with terrible regularity, echoed through the courtyard. The two officers sprang to the portico ; there they beheld a hundred or so of Chouans aiming at the few soldiers who were not shot down at the first discharge ; these they fired upon as upon so many hares. The Bretons swarmed from the bank, where Marche-à-Terre had posted them at the peril of their lives ; for after the last volley, and mingling with the cries of the dying, several Chouans were heard to fall into the lake, where they were lost like stones in a gulf. Pille-Miche

took aim at Gérard ; Marche-à-Terre held Merle at his mercy.

“ Captain,” said the marquis to Merle, repeating to the Republican his own words, “ you see that men are like medlars, they ripen on the straw.” He pointed with a wave of his hand to the entire escort of the Blues lying on the bloody litter where the Chouans were despatching those who still breathed, and rifling the dead bodies with incredible rapidity. “ I was right when I told you that your soldiers would not get as far as La Pèlerine. I think, moreover, that your head will fill with lead before mine. What say you ? ”

Montauran felt a horrible necessity to vent his rage. His bitter sarcasm, the ferocity, even the treachery of this military execution, done without his orders, but which he now accepted, satisfied in some degree the craving of his heart. In his fury he would fain have annihilated France. The dead Blues, the living officers, all innocent of the crime for which he demanded vengeance, were to him the cards by which a gambler cheats his despair.

“ I would rather perish thus than conquer as you are conquering,” said Gérard. Then, seeing the naked and bloody corpses of his men, he cried out, “ Murdered basely, in cold blood ! ”

“ That was how you murdered Louis XVI., monsieur,” said the marquis.

“ Monsieur,” replied Gérard, haughtily, “ there are mysteries in a king’s trial which you could never comprehend.”

“ Do you dare to accuse the king ? ” exclaimed the marquis.

“ Do you dare to fight your country ? ” retorted Gérard.

"Folly!" said the marquis.

"Parricide!" exclaimed the Republican.

"Well, well," cried Merle, gayly, "a pretty time to quarrel at the moment of your death."

"True," said Gérard, coldly, turning to the marquis. "Monsieur, if it is your intention to put us to death, at least have the goodness to shoot us at once."

"Ah! that's like you, Gérard," said Merle, "always in a hurry to finish things. But if one has to travel far and can't breakfast on the morrow, at least we might sup."

Gérard sprang forward without a word towards the wall. Pille-Miche covered him, glancing as he did so at the motionless marquis, whose silence he took for an order, and the adjutant-major fell like a tree. Marche-à-Terre ran to share the fresh booty with Pille-Miche; like two hungry crows they disputed and clamored over the still warm body.

"If you really wish to finish your supper, captain, you can come with me," said the marquis to Merle.

The captain followed him mechanically, saying in a low voice: "It is that devil of a strumpet that caused all this. What will Hulot say?"

"Strumpet!" cried the marquis, in a strangled voice, "then she is one?"

The captain seemed to have given Montauran a death-blow, for he re-entered the house with a staggering step, pale, haggard, and undone.

Another scene had meanwhile taken place in the dining-room, which assumed, in the marquis's absence, such a threatening character that Marie, alone without her protector, might well fancy she read her death-warrant in the eyes of her rival. At the noise of the

volley the guests all sprang to their feet, but Madame du Gua remained seated.

"It is nothing," she said; "our men are despatching the Blues." Then, seeing the marquis outside on the portico, she rose. "Mademoiselle whom you here see," she continued, with the calmness of concentrated fury, "came here to betray the Gars! She meant to deliver him up to the Republic."

"I could have done so twenty times to-day and yet I saved his life," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

Madame du Gua sprang upon her rival like lightning; in her blind excitement she tore apart the fastenings of the young girl's spencer, the stuff, the embroidery, the corset, the chemise, and plunged her savage hand into the bosom where, as she well knew, a letter lay hidden. In doing this her jealousy so bruised and tore the palpitating throat of her rival, taken by surprise at the sudden attack, that she left the bloody marks of her nails, feeling a sort of pleasure in making her submit to so degrading a prostitution. In the feeble struggle which Marie made against the furious woman, her hair became unfastened and fell in undulating curls about her shoulders; her face glowed with outraged modesty, and tears made their burning way along her cheeks, heightening the brilliancy of her eyes, as she quivered with shame before the looks of the assembled men. The hardest judge would have believed in her innocence when he saw her sorrow.

Hatred is so uncalculating that Madame du Gua did not perceive she had overshot her mark, and that no one listened to her as she cried triumphantly: "You shall now see, gentlemen, whether I have slandered that horrible creature."

"Not so horrible," said the bass voice of the guest who had thrown the first stone. "But for my part, I like such horrors."

"Here," continued the cruel woman, "is an order signed by Laplace, and counter-signed by Dubois, minister of war." At these names several heads were turned to her. "Listen to the wording of it," she went on.

"The military citizen-commanders of all grades, the district administrators, the *procureur-syndics*, et cetera, of the insurgent departments, and particularly those of the localities in which the ci-devant Marquis de Montauran, leader of the brigands and otherwise known as the Gars, may be found, are hereby commanded to give aid and assistance to the *citoyenne* Marie Verneuil and to obey the orders which she may give them at her discretion.'

"A worthless hussy takes a noble name to soil it with such treachery," added Madame du Gua.

A movement of astonishment ran through the assembly.

"The fight is not even if the Republic employs such pretty women against us," said the Baron du Guénic gayly.

"Especially women who have nothing to lose," said Madame du Gua.

"Nothing?" cried the Chevalier du Vissard. "Mademoiselle has a property which probably brings her in a pretty good sum."

"The Republic must like a joke, to send strumpets for ambassadors," said the Abbé Gudin.

"Unfortunately, Mademoiselle seeks the joys that kill," said Madame du Gua, with a horrible expression of pleasure at the end she foresaw.

“Then why are you still living?” said her victim, rising to her feet, after repairing the disorder of her clothes.

This bitter sarcasm excited a sort of respect for so brave a victim, and silenced the assembly. Madame du Gua saw a satirical smile on the lips of the men, which infuriated her, and paying no attention to the marquis and Merle who were entering the room, she called to the Chouan who followed them. “Pille-Miche!” she said, pointing to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, “take her; she is my share of the booty, and I turn her over to you—do what you like with her.”

At these words the whole assembly shuddered, for the hideous heads of Pille-Miche and Marche-à-Terre appeared behind the marquis, and the punishment was seen in all its horror.

Francine was standing with clasped hands as though paralyzed. Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who recovered her presence of mind before the danger that threatened her, cast a look of contempt at the assembled men, snatched the letter from Madame du Gua’s hand, threw up her head with a flashing eye, and darted towards the door where Merle’s sword was still leaning. There she came upon the marquis, cold and motionless as a statue. Nothing pleaded for her on his fixed, firm features. Wounded to the heart, life seemed odious to her. The man who had pledged her so much love must have heard the odious jests that were cast upon her, and stood there silently a witness of the infamy she had been made to endure. She might, perhaps, have forgiven him his contempt, but she could not forgive his having seen her in so humiliating a position, and she flung him a look that was full of hatred, feeling in her

heart the birth of an unutterable desire for vengeance. With death beside her, the sense of impotence almost strangled her. A whirlwind of passion and madness rose in her head; the blood which boiled in her veins made everything about her seem like a conflagration. Instead of killing herself, she seized the sword and thrust it through the marquis. But the weapon slipped between his arm and side; he caught her by the wrist and dragged her from the room, aided by Pille-Miche, who had flung himself upon the furious creature when she attacked his master. Francine shrieked aloud. "Pierre! Pierre! Pierre!" she cried in heart-rending tones, as she followed her mistress.

The marquis closed the door on the astonished company. When he reached the portico he was still holding the woman's wrist, which he clasped convulsively, while Pille-Miche had almost crushed the bones of her arm with his iron fingers, but Marie felt only the burning hand of the young leader.

"You hurt me," she said.

For all answer he looked at her a moment.

"Have you some base revenge to take — like that woman?" she said. Then, seeing the dead bodies on the heap of straw, she cried out, shuddering: "The faith of a gentleman! ha! ha! ha!" With a frightful laugh she added: "Ha! the glorious day!"

"Yes," he said, "a day without a morrow."

He let go her hand and took a long, last look at the beautiful creature he could scarcely even then renounce. Neither of these proud natures yielded. The marquis may have looked for a tear, but the eyes of the girl were dry and scornful. Then he turned quickly, and left the victim to Pille-Miche.

"God will hear me, marquis," she called. "I will ask Him to give you a glorious day without a morrow."

Pille-Miche, not a little embarrassed with so rich a prize, dragged her away with some gentleness and a mixture of respect and scorn. The marquis, with a sigh, re-entered the dining-room, his face like that of a dead man whose eyes have not been closed.

Merle's presence was inexplicable to the silent spectators of this tragedy; they looked at him in astonishment and their eyes questioned each other. Merle saw their amazement, and, true to his native character, he said, with a smile: "Gentlemen, you will scarcely refuse a glass of wine to a man who is about to make his last journey."

It was just as the company had calmed down under the influence of these words, said with a true French carelessness which pleased the Vendéans, that Montauran reappeared, his face pale, his eyes fixed.

"Now you shall see," said Merle, "how death can make men lively."

"Ah!" said the marquis, with a gesture as if suddenly awaking, "here you are, my dear councillor of war," and he passed him a bottle of *vin de Grave*.

"Oh, thanks, citizen marquis," replied Merle. "Now I can divert myself."

At this sally Madame du Gua turned to the other guests with a smile, saying, "Let us spare him the dessert."

"That is a very cruel vengeance, madame," he said. "You forget my murdered friend who is waiting for me; I never miss an appointment."

"Captain," said the marquis, throwing him his glove, "you are free; that's your passport. The

Chasseurs du Roi know that they must not kill all the game."

"So much the better for me!" replied Merle, "but you are making a mistake; we shall come to close quarters before long, and I'll not let you off. Though your head can never pay for Gérard's, I want it and I shall have it. Adieu. I could drink with my own assassins, but I cannot stay with those of my friend;" and he disappeared, leaving the guests astonished at his coolness.

"Well, gentlemen, what do you think of the lawyers and surgeons and bailiffs who manage the Republic," said the Gars, coldly.

"God's-death! marquis," replied the Comte de Bauvan; "they have shocking manners; that fellow presumed to be impertinent, it seems to me."

The captain's hasty retreat had a motive. The despised, humiliated woman, who was even then, perhaps, being put to death, had so won upon him during the scene of her degradation that he said to himself, as he left the room, "If she is a prostitute, she is not an ordinary one, and I'll marry her." He felt so sure of being able to rescue her from the savages that his first thought, when his own life was given to him, was to save hers. Unhappily, when he reached the portico, he found the courtyard deserted. He looked about him, listened to the silence, and could hear nothing but the distant shouts and laughter of the Chouans, who were drinking in the gardens and dividing their booty. He turned the corner to the fatal wing before which his men had been shot, and from there he could distinguish, by the feeble light of a few stray lanterns, the different groups of the Chasseurs du Roi. Neither Pille-Miche,

nor Marche-à-Terre, nor the girl were visible; but he felt himself gently pulled by the flap of his uniform, and, turning round, saw Francine on her knees.

"Where is she?" he asked.

"I don't know; Pierre drove me back and told me not to stir from here."

"Which way did they go?"

"That way," she replied, pointing to the causeway.

The captain and Francine then noticed in that direction a line of strong shadows thrown by the moonlight on the lake, and among them that of a female figure.

"It is she!" cried Francine.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil seemed to be standing, as if resigned, in the midst of other figures, whose gestures denoted a debate.

"There are several," said the captain. "Well, no matter, let us go to them."

"You will get yourself killed uselessly," said Francine.

"I have been killed once before to-day," he said gayly.

They both walked towards the gloomy gateway which led to the causeway; there Francine suddenly stopped short.

"No," she said, gently, "I'll go no farther; Pierre told me not to meddle; I believe in him; if we go on we shall spoil all. Do as you please, officer, but leave me. If Pierre saw us together he would kill you."

Just then Pille-Miche appeared in the gateway and called to the postilion who was left in the stable. At the same moment he saw the captain and covered him with his musket, shouting out, "By Saint Anne of Auray! the rector was right enough in telling us the

Blues had signed a compact with the devil. I'll bring you to life, I will!"

"Stop! my life is sacred," cried Merle, seeing his danger. "There's the glove of your Gars," and he held it out.

"Ghosts' lives are not sacred," replied the Chouan, "and I sha'n't give you yours. Ave Maria!"

He fired, and the ball passed through his victim's head. The captain fell. When Francine reached him she heard him mutter the words, "I'd rather die with them than return without them."

The Chouan sprang upon the body to strip it, saying, "There's one good thing about ghosts, they come to life in their clothes." Then, recognizing the Gars' glove, that sacred safeguard, in the captain's hand, he stopped short, terrified. "I wish I was n't in the skin of my mother's son!" he exclaimed, as he turned and disappeared with the rapidity of a bird.

To understand this scene, so fatal to poor Merle, we must follow Mademoiselle de Verneuil after the marquis, in his fury and despair, had abandoned her to Pille-Miche. Francine had caught Marche-à-Terre by the arm and reminded him, with sobs, of the promise he had made her. Pille-Miche was already dragging away his victim like a heavy bundle. Marie, her head and hair hanging back, turned her eyes to the lake; but held as she was in a grasp of iron she was forced to follow the Chouan, who turned now and then to hasten her steps, and each time that he did so a jovial thought brought a hideous smile upon his face.

"Is n't she a morsel!" he cried, with a coarse laugh.

Hearing the words, Francine recovered speech.

"Pierre?"

“ Well, what ? ”

“ He ’ll kill her.”

“ Not at once.”

“ Then she ’ll kill herself, she will never submit ; and if she dies I shall die too.”

“ Then you love her too much, and she shall die,” said Marche-à-Terre.

“ Pierre ! if we are rich and happy we owe it all to her ; but, whether or no, you promised me to save her.”

“ Well, I ’ll try ; but you must stay here, and don’t move.”

Francine at once let go his arm, and waited in horrible suspense in the courtyard where Merle found her. Meantime Marche-à-Terre joined his comrade at the moment when the latter, after dragging his victim to the barn, was compelling her to get into the coach. Pille-Miche called to him to help in pulling out the vehicle.

“ What are you going to do with all that ? ” asked Marche-à-Terre.

“ The Grande Garce gave me the woman, and all that belongs to her is mine.”

“ The coach will put a sou or two in your pocket ; but as for the woman, she ’ll scratch your eyes out like a cat.”

Pille-Miche burst into a roar of laughter.

“ Then I ’ll tie her and take her home,” he answered.

“ Very good ; suppose we harness the horses,” said Marche-à-Terre.

A few moments later Marche-à-Terre, who had left his comrade mounting guard over his prey, led the coach from the stable to the causeway, where Pille-Miche got into it beside Mademoiselle de Verneuil, not

perceiving that she was on the point of making a spring into the lake.

“I say, Pille-Miche!” cried Marche-à-Terre.

“What!”

“I’ll buy all your booty.”

“Are you joking?” asked the other, catching his prisoner by the petticoat, as a butcher catches a calf that is trying to escape him.

“Let me see her, and I’ll set a price.”

The unfortunate creature was made to leave the coach and stand between the two Chouans, who each held a hand and looked at her as the Elders must have looked at Susannah.

“Will you take thirty francs in good coin?” said Marche-à-Terre, with a groan.

“Really?”

“Done?” said Marche-à-Terre, holding out his hand.

“Yes, done; I can get plenty of Breton girls for that, and choice morsels, too. But the coach; whose is that?” asked Pille-Miche, beginning to reflect upon his bargain.

“Mine!” cried Marche-à-Terre, in a terrible tone of voice, which showed the sort of superiority his ferocious character gave him over his companions.

“But suppose there’s money in the coach?”

“Did n’t you say, ‘Done’?”

“Yes, I said, ‘Done.’”

“Very good; then go and fetch the postilion who is gagged in the stable over there.”

“But if there’s money in the —”

“Is there any?” asked Marche-à-Terre, roughly, shaking Marie by the arm.

“Yes, about a hundred crowns.”

The two Chouans looked at each other.

"Well, well, friend," said Pille-Miche, "we won't quarrel for a female Blue; let's pitch her into the lake with a stone round her neck, and divide the money."

"I'll give you all that money as my share in d'Orge-mont's ransom," said Marche-à-Terre, smothering a groan, caused by such sacrifice.

Pille-Miche uttered a sort of hoarse cry as he started to find the postilion, and his glee brought death to Merle, whom he met on his way.

Hearing the shot, Marche-à-Terre rushed in the direction where he had left Francine, and found her praying on her knees, with clasped hands, beside the poor captain, whose murder had deeply horrified her.

"Run to your mistress," said the Chouan; "she is saved."

He ran himself to fetch the postilion, returning with all speed, and, as he repassed Merle's body, he noticed the Gars' glove, which was still convulsively clasped in the dead hand.

"Oho!" he cried. "Pille-Miche has blundered horribly—he won't live to spend his crowns."

He snatched up the glove and said to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who was already in the coach with Francine: "Here, take this glove. If any of our men attack you on the road, call out 'Ho, the Gars!' show the glove, and no harm can happen to you. Francine," he said, turning towards her and seizing her hand violently, "you and I are quits with that woman; come with me and let the devil have her."

"You can't ask me to abandon her just at this moment!" cried Francine, in distress.

Marche-à-Terre scratched his ear and forehead, then

he raised his head, and his mistress saw the ferocious expression of his eyes. "You are right," he said; "I leave you with her one week; if at the end of that time you don't come with me —" he did not finish the sentence, but he slapped the muzzle of his gun with the flat of his hand. After making the gesture of taking aim at her, he disappeared, without waiting for her reply.

No sooner was he gone than a voice, which seemed to issue from the lake, called, in a muffled tone: "Madame, madame!"

The postilion and the two women shuddered, for several corpses were floating near them. A Blue, hidden behind a tree, cautiously appeared.

"Let me get up behind the coach, or I'm a dead man. That damned cider which Clef-des-Cœurs would stop to drink cost more than a pint of blood. If he had done as I did, and made his round, our poor comrades there wouldn't be floating dead in the pond."

While these events were taking place outside the château, the leaders sent by the Vendéans and those of the Chouans were holding a council of war, with their glasses in their hands, under the presidency of the Marquis de Montauran. Frequent libations of Bordeaux animated the discussion, which, however, became more serious and important at the end of the meal. After the general plan of military operations had been decided on, the Royalists drank to the health of the Bourbons. It was at that moment that the shot which killed Merle was heard, like an echo of the disastrous war which these gay and noble conspirators

were about to make against the Republic. Madame du Gua quivered with pleasure at the thought that she was freed from her rival; the guests looked at each other in silence; the marquis rose from the table and went out.

“He loved her!” said Madame du Gua, sarcastically. “Follow him, Monsieur de Fontaine, and keep him company; he will be as irritating as a fly if we let him sulk.”

She went to a window which looked on the courtyard to endeavor to see Marie’s body. There, by the last gleams of the sinking moon, she caught sight of the coach being rapidly driven down the avenue of apple-trees. Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s veil was fluttering in the wind. Madame du Gua, furious at the sight, left the room hurriedly. The marquis, standing on the portico absorbed in gloomy thought, was watching about a hundred and fifty Chouans, who, having divided their booty in the gardens, were now returning to finish the cider and the rye-bread provided for the Blues. These soldiers of a new species, on whom the monarchy was resting its hopes, dispersed into groups. Some drank the cider; others, on the bank before the portico, amused themselves by flinging into the lake the dead bodies of the Blues, to which they fastened stones. This sight, joined to the other aspects of the strange scene, — the fantastic dress, the savage expressions of the barbarous and uncouth *gars*, — was so new and so amazing to Monsieur de Fontaine, accustomed to the nobler and better-regulated appearance of the Vendéan troops, that he seized the occasion to say to the Marquis de Montauran, “What do you expect to do with such brutes?”

“Not very much, my dear count,” replied the Gars.

“Will they ever be fit to manoeuvre before the enemy?”

“Never.”

“Can they even understand or execute an order?”

“No.”

“Then what good will they be to you?”

“They will help me to plunge my sword into the entrails of the Republic,” replied the marquis in a thundering voice. “They will give me Fougères in three days, and all Brittany in ten! Monsieur,” he added in a gentler voice, “start at once for La Vendée; if d’Auticamp, Suzannet, and the Abbé Bernier will act as rapidly as I do, if they’ll not negotiate with the First Consul, as I am afraid they will” (here he wrung the hand of the Vendéan chief) “we shall be within reach of Paris in a fortnight.”

“But the Republic is sending sixty thousand men and General Brune against us.”

“Sixty thousand men! indeed!” cried the marquis, with a scoffing laugh. “And how will Bonaparte carry on the Italian campaign? As for General Brune, he is not coming. The First Consul has sent him against the English in Holland, and General Hédouville, *the friend of our friend Barras*, takes his place here. Do you understand?”

As Monsieur de Fontaine heard these words he gave Montauran a look of keen intelligence which seemed to say that the marquis had not himself understood the real meaning of the words addressed to him. The two leaders then comprehended each other perfectly, and the Gars replied with an undefinable smile to the thoughts expressed in both their eyes: “Monsieur de Fontaine,

do you know my arms? our motto is 'Persevere unto death.' "

The Comte de Fontaine took Montauran's hand and pressed it, saying: "I was left for dead at Quatre-Chemins, therefore you need never doubt me. But believe in my experience — times have changed."

"Yes," said La Billardière, who now joined them. "You are young, marquis. Listen to me; your property has not yet been sold —"

"Ah!" cried Montauran, "can you conceive of devotion without sacrifice?"

"Do you really know the king?"

"I do."

"Then I admire your loyalty."

"The king," replied the young chieftain, "is the priest; I am fighting not for the man, but for the faith."

They parted, — the Vendéan leader convinced of the necessity of yielding to circumstances and keeping his beliefs in the depths of his heart; La Billardière to return to his negotiations in England; and Montauran to fight savagely and compel the Vendéans, by the victories he expected to win, to co-operate in his enterprise.

The events of the day had excited such violent emotions in Mademoiselle de Verneuil's whole being that she lay back almost fainting in the carriage, after giving the order to drive to Fougères. Francine was as silent as her mistress. The postilion, dreading some new disaster, made all the haste he could to reach the high-road, and was soon on the summit of La Pèlerine. Through the thick white mists of morning Marie de Verneuil crossed the broad and beautiful valley of Couësson (where this history began) scarcely able to

distinguish the slaty rock on which the town of Fougères stands from the slopes of La Pèlerine. They were still eight miles from it. Shivering with cold herself, Mademoiselle de Verneuil recollected the poor soldier behind the carriage, and insisted, against his remonstrances, in taking him into the carriage beside Francine. The sight of Fougères drew her for a time out of her reflections. The sentinels stationed at the Porte Saint-Léonard refused to allow ingress to the strangers, and she was therefore obliged to exhibit the ministerial order. This at once gave her safety in entering the town, but the postilion could find no other place for her to stop at than the Poste inn.

“Madame,” said the Blue whose life she had saved. “If you ever want a sabre to deal some special blow, my life is yours. I am good for that. My name is Jean Falcon, otherwise called Beau-Pied, sergeant of the first company of Hulot’s veterans, seventy-second half-brigade, nicknamed ‘Les Mayençais.’ Excuse my vanity; I can only offer you the soul of a sergeant, but that’s at your service.”

He turned on his heel and walked off whistling.

“The lower one goes in social life,” said Marie, bitterly, “the more we find generous feelings without display. A marquis returns me death for life, and a poor sergeant — but enough of that.”

When the weary woman was at last in a warm bed, her faithful Francine waited in vain for the affectionate good-night to which she was accustomed; but her mistress, seeing her still standing and evidently uneasy, made her a sign of distress.

“This is called a day, Francine,” she said; “but I have aged ten years in it.”

The next morning, as soon as she had risen, Corentin came to see her and she admitted him.

"Francine," she exclaimed, "my degradation is great indeed, for the thought of that man is not disagreeable to me."

Still, when she saw him, she felt once more, for the hundredth time, the instinctive repulsion which two years' intercourse had increased rather than lessened.

"Well," he said, smiling, "I felt certain you were succeeding. Was I mistaken? did you get hold of the wrong man?"

"Corentin," she replied, with a dull look of pain, "never mention that affair to me unless I speak of it myself."

He walked up and down the room casting oblique glances at her, endeavoring to guess the secret thoughts of the singular woman whose mere glance had the power of discomfiting at times the cleverest men.

"I foresaw this check," he replied, after a moment's silence. "If you would be willing to establish your headquarters in this town, I have already found a suitable place for you. We are in the very centre of Chouannerie. Will you stay here?"

She answered with an affirmative sign, which enabled Corentin to make conjectures, partly correct, as to the events of the preceding evening.

"I can hire a house for you, a bit of national property still unsold. They are behind the age in these parts. No one has dared buy the old barrack because it belonged to an *émigré* who was thought to be harsh. It is close to the church of Saint Léonard; and on my word of honor the view from it is delightful. Something can really be made of the old place; will you try it?"

“Yes, at once,” she cried.

“I want a few hours to have it cleaned and put in order for you, so that you may like it.”

“What matter?” she said. “I could live in a cloister or a prison without caring. However, see that everything is in order before night, so that I may sleep there in perfect solitude. Go, leave me; your presence is intolerable. I wish to be alone with Francine; she is better for me than my own company, perhaps. Adieu; go — go, I say.”

These words, said volubly with a mingling of coquetry, depotism, and passion, showed she had entirely recovered her self-possession. Sleep had no doubt classified the impressions of the preceding day, and reflection had determined her on vengeance. If a few reluctant signs appeared on her face they only proved the ease with which certain women can bury the better feelings of their souls, and the cruel dissimulation which enables them to smile sweetly while planning the destruction of a victim. She sat alone after Corentin had left her, thinking how she could get the marquis still living into her toils. For the first time in her life this woman had lived according to her inmost desires; but of that life nothing remained but one craving, — that of vengeance, — vengeance complete and infinite. It was her one thought, her sole desire. Francine’s words and attentions were unnoticed. Marie seemed to be sleeping with her eyes open; and the long day passed without an action or even a gesture that bore testimony to her thoughts. She lay on a couch which she had made of chairs and pillows. It was late in the evening when a few words escaped her, as if involuntarily.

“My child,” she said to Francine, “I understood

yesterday what it was to live for love ; to-day I know what it means to die for vengeance. Yes, I will give my life to seek him wherever he may be, to meet him, seduce him, make him mine ! If I do not have that man, who dared to despise me, at my feet humble and submissive, if I do not make him my lackey and my slave, I shall indeed be base ; I shall not be a woman ; I shall not be myself."

The house which Corentin now hired for Mademoiselle de Verneuil offered many gratifications to the innate love of luxury and elegance that was part of this girl. The capricious creature took possession of it with regal composure, as of a thing which already belonged to her ; she appropriated the furniture and arranged it with intuitive sympathy, as though she had known it all her life. This is a vulgar detail, but one that is not unimportant in sketching the character of so exceptional a person. She seemed to have been already familiarized in a dream with the house in which she now lived on her hatred as she might have lived on her love.

"At least," she said to herself, "I did not rouse insulting pity in him ; I do not owe him my life. Oh, my first, my last, my only love ! what an end to it !" She sprang upon Francine, who was terrified. "Do you love a man ? Oh, yes, yes, I remember ; you do. I am glad I have a woman here who can understand me. Ah, my poor Francette, man is a miserable being. Ha ! he said he loved me, and his love could not bear the slightest test ! But I, — if all men had accused him I would have defended him ; if the universe rejected him my soul should have been his refuge. In the old days life was filled with human beings coming and going for whom I did not care ; it was sad and dull, but not hor-

rible ; but now, now, what is life without him? He will live on, and I not near him! I shall not see him, speak to him, feel him, hold him, press him, — ha! I would rather strangle him myself in his sleep!”

Francine, horrified, looked at her in silence.

“Kill the man you love?” she said, in a soft voice.

“Yes, yes, if he ceases to love me.”

But after those ruthless words she hid her face in her hands, and sat down silently.

The next day a man presented himself without being announced. His face was stern. It was Hulot, followed by Corentin. Mademoiselle de Verneuil looked at the commandant and trembled.

“You have come,” she said, “to ask me to account for your friends. They are dead.”

“I know it,” he replied, “and not in the service of the Republic.”

“For me, and by me,” she said. “You preach the nation to me. Can the nation bring to life those who die for her? Can she even avenge them? But I—I will avenge them!” she cried. The awful images of the catastrophe filled her imagination suddenly, and the graceful creature who held modesty to be the first of women’s wiles forgot herself in a moment of madness, and marched towards the amazed commandant brusquely.

“In exchange for a few murdered soldiers,” she said, “I will bring to the block a head which is worth a million heads of other men. It is not a woman’s business to make war; but you, old as you are, shall learn good stratagems of me. I’ll deliver a whole family to your bayonets — him, his ancestors, his past, his future. I will be as false and treacherous to him as I was good

and true. Yes, commandant, I will bring that little noble to my arms, and he shall leave them to go to death. I will have no other rival. The wretch himself pronounced his doom, — *a day without a morrow*. Your Republic and I shall be avenged. The Republic!" she cried in a voice the strange intonations of which horrified Hulot. "Is he to die for bearing arms against the nation? Shall I suffer France to rob me of my vengeance? Ah! what a little thing is life! death can expiate but one crime. He has but one head to fall, but I will make him know in one night that he loses more than life. Commandant, you who will kill him," and she sighed, "see that nothing betrays my betrayal; he must die convinced of my fidelity. I ask that of you. Let him know only me — me, and my caresses!"

She stopped; but through the crimson of her cheeks Hulot and Corentin saw that rage and delirium had not entirely smothered all sense of shame. Marie shuddered violently as she said the words; she seemed to listen to them as though she doubted whether she herself had said them, and she made the involuntary movement of a woman whose veil is falling from her.

"But you had him in your power," said Corentin.

"Very likely."

"Why did you stop me when I had him?" asked Hulot.

"I did not know what he would prove to be," she cried. Then, suddenly, the excited woman, who was walking up and down with hurried steps and casting savage glances at the spectators of the storm, calmed down. "I do not know myself," she said, in a man's tone. "Why talk? I must go and find him."

“Go and find him?” said Hulot. “My dear woman, take care; we are not yet masters of this part of the country; if you venture outside of the town you will be taken or killed before you’ve gone a hundred yards.”

“There’s never any danger for those who seek vengeance,” she said, driving from her presence with a disdainful gesture the two men whom she was ashamed to face.

“What a woman!” cried Hulot, as he walked away with Corentin. “A queer idea of those police fellows in Paris to send her here; but she’ll never deliver him up to us,” he added, shaking his head.

“Oh yes, she will,” replied Corentin.

“Don’t you see she loves him?” said Hulot.

“That’s just why she will. Besides,” looking at the amazed commandant, “I am here to see that she does n’t commit any folly. In my opinion, comrade, there is no love in the world worth the three hundred thousand francs she’ll make out of this.”

When the police diplomatist left the soldier the latter stood looking after him, and as the sound of the man’s steps died away he gave a sigh, muttering to himself, “It may be a good thing after all to be such a dullard as I am. God’s thunder! if I meet the Gars I’ll fight him hand to hand, or my name’s not Hulot; for if that fox brings him before me in any of their new-fangled councils of war, my honor will be as soiled as the shirt of a young trooper who is under fire for the first time.”

The massacre at La Vivetière, and the desire to avenge his friends had led Hulot to accept a reinstatement in his late command; in fact, the new minister, Berthier, had refused to accept his resignation under existing circumstances. To the official dispatch was

added a private letter, in which, without explaining the mission of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, the minister informed him that the affair was entirely outside of the war, and was not to interfere with any military operations. The duty of the commanders, he said, was limited to giving needed assistance to that honorable *citoyenne*, if occasion arose. Learning from his scouts that the movements of the Chouans all tended towards a concentration of their forces in the neighborhood of Fougères, Hulot had secretly and with forced marches brought two battalions of his brigade into the town. The nation's danger, his hatred of aristocracy, whose partisans threatened to convulse so large a section of country, his desire to avenge his murdered friends, revived in the old veteran the fire of his youth.

"So this is the life I craved," exclaimed Mademoiselle de Verneuil, when she was left alone with Francine. "No matter how fast the hours go, they are to me like centuries of thought."

Suddenly she took Francine's hand, and her voice, soft as that of the first red-throat singing after a storm, slowly gave sound to the following words:—

"Try as I will to forget them, I see those two delicious lips, that chin just raised, those eyes of fire; I hear the 'Hue!' of the postilion; I dream, I dream,—why then such hatred on awakening!"

She drew a long sigh, rose, and then for the first time looked out upon the country delivered over to civil war by the cruel leader whom she was plotting to destroy. Attracted by the scene she wandered out to breathe at her ease beneath the sky; and though her steps conducted her at a venture, she was surely led to the

Promenade of the town by one of those occult impulses of the soul which lead us to follow hope irrationally. Thoughts conceived under the dominion of that spell are often realized ; but we then attribute their prevision to a power we call presentiment, — an inexplicable power, but a real one, — which our passions find accommodating, like a flatterer who, among his many lies, does sometimes tell the truth.

III.

A DAY WITHOUT A MORROW.

THE preceding events of this history having been greatly influenced by the formation of the regions in which they happened, it is desirable to give a minute description of them, without which the closing scenes might be difficult of comprehension.

The town of Fougères is partly built upon a slate rock, which seems to have slipped from the mountains that hem in the broad valley of Couësson to the west and take various names according to their localities. The town is separated from the mountains by a gorge, through which flows a small river called the Nançon. To the east, the view is the same as from the summit of La Pèlerine ; to the west, the town looks down into the tortuous valley of the Nançon ; but there is a spot from which a section of the great valley and the picturesque windings of the gorge can be seen at the same time. This place, chosen by the inhabitants of the town for their Promenade, and to which the steps of Mademoiselle de Verneuil were now turned, was destined to be the theatre on which the drama begun at La Vivetière was to end. Therefore, however picturesque the other parts of Fougères may be, attention must be particularly given to the scenery which meets the eye from this terrace.

To give an idea of the rock on which Fougères stands, as seen on this side, we may compare it to one of those immense towers circled by Saracen architects with balconies on each story, which were reached by spiral stairways. To add to this effect, the rock is capped by a Gothic church, the small spires, clock-tower, and buttresses of which make its shape almost precisely that of a sugar-loaf. Before the portal of this church, which is dedicated to Saint-Léonard, is a small, irregular square, where the soil is held up by a buttressed wall, which forms a balustrade and communicates by a flight of steps with the Promenade. This public walk, like a second cornice, extends round the rock a few rods below the square of Saint-Léonard; it is a broad piece of ground planted with trees, and it joins the fortifications of the town. About ten rods below the walls and rocks which support this Promenade (due to a happy combination of indestructible slate and patient industry) another circular road exists, called the "Queen's Staircase;" this is cut in the rock itself and leads to a bridge built across the Nançon by Anne of Brittany. Below this road, which forms a third cornice, gardens descend, terrace after terrace, to the river, like shelves covered with flowers.

Parallel with the Promenade, on the other side of the Nançon and across its narrow valley, high rock-formations, called the heights of Saint-Sulpice, follow the stream and descend in gentle slopes to the great valley, where they turn abruptly to the north. Towards the south, where the town itself really ends and the faubourg Saint-Léonard begins, the Fougères rock makes a bend, becomes less steep, and turns into the great valley, following the course of the river, which it

hems in between itself and the heights of Saint-Sulpice, forming a sort of pass through which the water escapes in two streamlets to the Couësnon, into which they fall. This pretty group of rocky hills is called the "Nid-aux-Crocs;" the little vale they surround is the "Val de Gibarry," the rich pastures of which supply the butter known to epicures as that of the "Prée-Valaye."

At the point where the Promenade joins the fortifications is a tower called the "Tour de Papegaut." Close to this square erection, against the side of which the house now occupied by Mademoiselle de Verneuil rested, is a wall, partly built by hands and partly formed of the native rock where it offered a smooth surface. Here stands a gateway leading to the faubourg of Saint-Sulpice and bearing the same name. Above, on a breastwork of granite which commands the three valleys, rise the battlements and feudal towers of the ancient castle of Fougères, — one of those enormous erections built by the Dukes of Brittany, with lofty walls fifteen feet thick, protected on the east by a pond from which flows the Nançon, the waters of which fill its moats, and on the west by the inaccessible granite rock on which it stands.

Seen from the Promenade, this magnificent relic of the Middle Ages, wrapped in its ivy mantle, adorned with its square or rounded towers, in either of which a whole regiment could be quartered, — the castle, the town, and the rock, protected by walls with sheer surfaces, or by the glacis of the fortifications, form a huge horseshoe, lined with precipices, on which the Bretons have, in course of ages, cut various narrow footways. Here and there the rocks push out like architectural

adornments. Streamlets issue from the fissures, where the roots of stunted trees are nourished. Farther on, a few rocky slopes, less perpendicular than the rest, afford a scanty pasture for the goats. On all sides heather, growing from every crevice, flings its rosy garlands over the dark, uneven surface of the ground. At the bottom of this vast funnel the little river winds through meadows that are always cool and green, lying softly like a carpet.

Beneath the castle and among the granite boulders is a church dedicated to Saint-Sulpice, whose name is given to the suburb which lies across the Nançon. This suburb, flung as it were to the bottom of a precipice, and its church, the spire of which does not rise to the height of the rocks which threaten to crush it, are picturesquely watered by several affluents of the Nançon, shaded by trees and brightened by gardens. The whole region of Fougères, its suburbs, its churches, and the hills of Saint-Sulpice are surrounded by the heights of Rillé, which form part of a general range of mountains inclosing the broad valley of Couësson.

Such are the chief features of this landscape, the principal characteristic of which is a rugged wildness softened by smiling accidents, by a happy blending of the finest works of men's hands with the capricious lay of a land full of unexpected contrasts, by a something, hardly to be explained, which surprises, astonishes, and puzzles. In no other part of France can the traveller meet with such grandiose contrasts as those offered by the great basin of the Couësson, and the valleys hidden among the rocks of Fougères and the heights of Rillé. Their beauty is of that unspeakable kind in which chance triumphs and all the harmonies of Nature do

their part. The clear, limpid, flowing waters, the mountains clothed with the vigorous vegetation of those regions, the sombre rocks, the graceful buildings, the fortifications raised by nature, and the granite towers built by man; combined with all the artifices of light and shade, with the contrasts of the varieties of foliage, with the groups of houses where an active population swarms, with the lonely barren places where the granite will not suffer even the lichen to fasten on its surface, in short, with all the ideas we ask a landscape to possess: grace and awfulness, poesy with its nascent magic, sublime pictures, delightful ruralities, — all these are here; it is Brittany in bloom.

The tower called the Papegaut, against which the house now occupied by Mademoiselle de Verneuil rested, has its base at the very bottom of the precipice, and rises to the esplanade which forms the cornice or terrace before the church of Saint-Léonard. From Marie's house, which was open on three sides, could be seen the horseshoe (which begins at the tower itself), the winding valley of the Nançon, and the square of Saint-Léonard. It is one of a group of wooden buildings standing parallel with the western side of the church, with which they form an alley-way, the farther end of which opens on a steep street skirting the church and leading to the gate of Saint-Léonard, along which Mademoiselle de Verneuil now made her way.

Marie naturally avoided entering the square of the church which was then above her, and turned towards the Promenade. The magnificence of the scene which met her eyes silenced for a moment the tumult of her passions. She admired the vast trend of the valley, which her eyes took in, from the summit of La Pèlerine

to the plateau where the main road to Vitry passes ; then her eyes rested on the Nid-aux-Crocs and the winding gorges of the Val de Gibarry, the crests of which were bathed in the misty glow of the setting sun. She was almost frightened by the depth of the valley of the Nançon, the tallest poplars of which scarcely reached to the level of the gardens below the Queen's Staircase. At this time of day the smoke from the houses in the suburbs and in the valleys made a vapor in the air, through which the various objects had a bluish tinge ; the brilliant colors of the day were beginning to fade ; the firmament took a pearly tone ; the moon was casting its veil of light into the ravine ; all things tended to plunge the soul into revery and bring back the memory of those beloved.

In a moment the scene before her was powerless to hold Marie's thoughts. In vain did the setting sun cast its gold-dust and its crimson sheets to the depths of the river and along the meadows and over the graceful buildings strewn among the rocks ; she stood immovable, gazing at the heights of the Mont Saint-Sulpice. The frantic hope which had led her to the Promenade was miraculously realized. Among the gorse and bracken which grew upon those heights she was certain that she recognized, in spite of the goatskins which they wore, a number of the guests at La Vivetière, and among them the Gars, whose every movement became vivid to her eyes in the softened light of the sinking sun. A few steps back of the group of men she distinguished her enemy, Madame du Gua. For a moment Marie fancied that she dreamed, but her rival's hatred soon proved to her that the dream was a living one. The attention she was giving to the least little

gesture of the marquis prevented her from observing the care with which Madame du Gua aimed a musket at her. But a shot which woke the echoes of the mountains, and a ball that whistled past her warned Mademoiselle de Verneuil of her rival's determination. "She sends me her card," thought Marie, smiling. Instantly a "Qui vive?" echoing from sentry to sentry, from the castle to the Porte Saint-Léonard, proved to the Chouans the alertness of the Blues, inasmuch as the least accessible of their ramparts was so well guarded.

"It is she — and he," muttered Marie to herself.

To seek the marquis, follow his steps and overtake him, was a thought that flashed like lightning through her mind. "I have no weapon!" she cried. She remembered that on leaving Paris she had flung into a trunk an elegant dagger formerly belonging to a sultana, which she had jestingly brought with her to the theatre of war, as some persons take note-books in which to jot down their travelling ideas; she was less attracted by the prospect of shedding blood than by the pleasure of wearing a pretty weapon studded with precious stones, and playing with a blade that was stainless. Three days earlier she had deeply regretted having put this dagger in a trunk, when to escape her enemies at La Vivetière she had thought for a moment of killing herself. She now returned to the house, found the weapon, put it in her belt, wrapped a large shawl round her shoulders and a black lace scarf about her hair, and covered her head with one of those broad-brimmed hats distinctive of Chouans which belonged to a servant of the house. Then, with the presence of mind which excited passions often give, she took the glove which Marche-à-Terre had given her as a safeguard, and

saying, in reply to Francine's terrified looks, "I would seek him in hell," she returned to the Promenade.

The Gars was still at the same place, but alone. By the direction of his telescope he seemed to be examining with the careful attention of a commander the various paths across the Nançon, the Queen's Staircase, and the road leading through the Porte Saint-Sulpice and round the church of that name, where it meets the high-road under range of the guns at the castle. Mademoiselle de Verneuil took one of the little paths made by goats and their keepers leading down from the Promenade, reached the Staircase, then the bottom of the ravine, crossed the Nançon and the suburb, and divining like a bird in the desert her right course among the dangerous precipices of the Mont Saint-Sulpice, she followed a slippery track defined upon the granite, and in spite of the prickly gorse and reeds and loose stones which hindered her, she climbed the steep ascent with an energy greater perhaps than that of a man, — the energy momentarily possessed by a woman under the influence of passion.

Night overtook her as she endeavored by the failing moonlight to make out the path the marquis must have taken; an obstinate quest without reward, for the dead silence about her was sufficient proof of the withdrawal of the Chouans and their leader. This effort of passion collapsed with the hope that inspired it. Finding herself alone, after nightfall, in a hostile country, she began to reflect; and Hulot's advice, together with the recollection of Madame du Gua's attempt, made her tremble with fear. The stillness of the night, so deep in mountain regions, enabled her to hear the fall of every leaf even at a distance, and these slight sounds

vibrated on the air as though to give a measure of the silence or the solitude. The wind was blowing across the heights and sweeping away the clouds with violence, producing an alternation of shadows and light, the effect of which increased her fears, and gave fantastic and terrifying semblances to the most harmless objects. She turned her eyes to the houses of Fougères, where the domestic lights were burning like so many earthly stars, and she presently saw distinctly the tower of Papegaut. She was but a very short distance from her own house, but within that space was the ravine. She remembered the declivities which bordered the narrow path by which she had come, and wondered if there were not more risk in attempting to return to Fougères than in following out the purpose which had brought her. She reflected that the marquis's glove would surely protect her from the Chouans, and that Madame du Gua was the only enemy to be really feared. With this idea in her mind, Marie clasped her dagger, and tried to find the way to a country house the roofs of which she had noticed as she climbed Saint-Sulpice ; but she walked slowly, for she suddenly became aware of the majestic solemnity which oppresses a solitary being in the night time in the midst of wild scenery, where lofty mountains nod their heads like assembled giants. The rustle of her gown, caught by the brambles, made her tremble more than once, and more than once she hastened her steps only to slacken them again as she thought her last hour had come. Before long matters assumed an aspect which the boldest men could not have faced without alarm, and which threw Mademoiselle de Verneuil into the sort of terror that so affects the very springs of life that all things become excessive,

weakness as well as strength. The feeblest beings will then do deeds of amazing power; the strongest go mad with fear.

Marie heard at a short distance a number of strange sounds, distinct yet vague, indicative of confusion and tumult, fatiguing to the ear which tried to distinguish them. They came from the ground, which seemed to tremble beneath the feet of a multitude of marching men. A momentary clearness in the sky enabled her to perceive at a little distance long files of hideous figures waving like ears of corn and gliding like phantoms; but she scarcely saw them, for darkness fell again, like a black curtain, and hid the fearful scene which seemed to her full of yellow, dazzling eyes. She turned hastily and ran to the top of a bank to escape meeting three of these horrible figures who were coming towards her.

“Did you see it?” said one.

“I felt a cold wind as it rushed past me,” replied a hoarse voice.

“I smelt a damp and graveyard smell,” said the third.

“Was it white?” asked the first.

“Why should only *he* come back out of all those we left dead at La Pèlerine?” said the second.

“Why indeed?” replied the third. “Why do the Sacré-Cœur men have the preference? Well, at any rate, I’d rather die without confession than wander about as he does, without eating or drinking, and no blood in his body or flesh on his bones.”

“Ah!”

This exclamation, or rather this fearful cry, issued from the group as the three Chouans pointed to the

slender form and pallid face of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who fled away with terrified rapidity without a sound.

“Here he is!” “There he is!” “Where?” “There!” “He’s gone!” “No!” “Yes!” “Can you see him?” These cries reverberated like the monotonous murmur of waves upon a shore.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil walked bravely in the direction of the house she had seen, and soon came in sight of a number of persons, who all fled away at her approach with every sign of panic fear. She felt impelled to advance by a mysterious power which coerced her; the lightness of her body, which seemed to herself inexplicable, was another source of terror. These forms which rose in masses at her approach, as if from the ground on which she trod, uttered moans which were scarcely human. At last she reached, not without difficulty, a trampled garden, the hedges and fences of which were broken down. Stopped by a sentry, she showed the glove. The moon lighted her face, and the muzzle of the gun already pointed at her was dropped by the Chouan, who uttered a hoarse cry, which echoed through the place. She now saw large buildings, where a few lighted windows showed the rooms that were occupied; and presently reached the walls without further hindrance. Through the window into which she looked, she saw Madame du Gua and the leaders who were convoked at La Vivetière. Bewildered at the sight, also by the conviction of her danger, she turned hastily to a little opening protected by iron bars, and saw in a long vaulted hall the marquis, alone and gloomy, within six feet of her. The reflection of the fire, before which he was sitting in a clumsy chair,

lighted his face with a vacillating ruddy glow that gave the character of a vision to the scene. Motionless and trembling, the girl stood clinging to the bars, hoping, in the deep silence that pervaded everything, to catch his words if he spoke. Seeing him so depressed, disheartened, and pale, she believed herself the cause of his sadness. Her anger changed to pity, her pity to tenderness, and she suddenly knew that it was not revenge alone which had brought her there.

The marquis rose, turned his head, and stood amazed when he saw, as if in a cloud, Mademoiselle de Verneuil's face; then he shook his head with a gesture of impatience and contempt, exclaiming: "Must I forever see the face of that devil, even when awake?"

This utter contempt for her forced a half-maddened laugh from the unhappy girl which made the young leader quiver. He sprang to the window, but Mademoiselle de Verneuil was gone. She heard the steps of a man behind her, which she supposed to be those of the marquis, and, to escape him, she knew no obstacles; she would have scaled walls and flown through air; she would have found and followed a path to hell sooner than have seen again, in flaming letters on the forehead of that man, "I despise you," — words which an inward voice sounded in her soul with the noise of a trumpet.

After walking a short distance without knowing where she went, she stopped, conscious of a damp exhalation. Alarmed by the sound of voices, she went down some steps which led into a cellar. As she reached the last of them, she stopped to listen and discover the direction her pursuers might take. Above the sounds from the outside, which were somewhat

loud, she could hear within the lugubrious moans of a human being, which added to her terror. Rays of light coming down the steps made her fear that this retreat was only too well known to her enemies, and, to escape them, she summoned fresh energy. Some moments later, after recovering her composure of mind, it was difficult for her to conceive by what means she had been able to climb a little wall, in a recess of which she was now hidden. She took no notice at first of the cramped position in which she was, but before long the pain of it became intolerable, for she was bending double under the arched opening of a vault, like the crouching Venus which ignorant persons attempt to squeeze into too narrow a niche. The wall, which was rather thick and built of granite, formed a low partition between the stairway and the cellar whence the groans were issuing. Presently she saw an individual, clothed in a goatskin, enter the cave beneath her, and move about, without making any sign of eager search. Impatient to discover if she had any chance of safety, Mademoiselle de Verneuil waited with anxiety till the light brought by the new-comer lighted the whole cave, where she could partly distinguish a formless but living mass which was trying to reach a part of the wall, with violent and repeated jerks, something like those of a carp lying out of the water on a shore.

A small pine torch threw its blue and hazy light into the cave. In spite of the gloomy poetic effects which Mademoiselle de Verneuil's imagination cast about this vaulted chamber, which was echoing to the sounds of a pitiful prayer, she was obliged to admit that the place was nothing more than an underground kitchen, evidently long abandoned. When the formless mass was

distinguishable it proved to be a short and very fat man, whose limbs were carefully bound before he had been left lying on the damp stone floor of the kitchen by those who had seized him. When he saw the new-comer approach him with a torch in one hand and a fagot of sticks in the other, the captive gave a dreadful groan, which so wrought upon the sensibilities of Mademoiselle de Verneuil that she forgot her own terror and despair and the cramped position of all her limbs, which were growing numb. But she made a great effort and remained still. The Chouan flung the sticks into the fireplace, after trying the strength of an old crane which was fastened to a long iron bar; then he set fire to the wood with his torch. Marie saw with terror that the man was the same Pille-Miche to whom her rival had delivered her, and whose figure, illuminated by the flame, was like that of the little boxwood men so grotesquely carved in Germany. The moans of his prisoner produced a broad grin upon features that were ribbed with wrinkles and tanned by the sun.

"You see," he said to his victim, "that we Christians keep our promises, which you don't. That fire is going to thaw out your legs and tongue and hands. Hey! hey! I don't see a dripping-pan to put under your feet; they are so fat the grease may put out the fire. Your house must be badly furnished if it can't give its master all he wants to warm him."

The victim uttered a sharp cry, as if he hoped someone would hear him through the ceiling and come to his assistance.

"Ho! sing away, Monsieur d'Orgemont; they are all asleep upstairs, and Marche-à-Terre is just behind me; he'll shut the cellar door."

While speaking Pille-Miche was sounding with the butt-end of his musket the mantel-piece of the chimney, the tiles of the floor, the walls and the ovens, to discover, if possible, where the miser hid his gold. This search was made with such adroitness that d'Orgemont kept silence, as if he feared to have been betrayed by some frightened servant; for, though he trusted his secrets to no one, his habits gave plenty of ground for logical deductions. Pille-Miche turned several times sharply to look at his victim, as children do when they try to guess, by the conscious expression of the comrade who has hidden an article, whether they are nearer or farther away from it. D'Orgemont pretended to be alarmed when the Chouan tapped the ovens, which sounded hollow, and seemed to wish to play upon his eager credulity. Just then three other Chouans rushed down the steps and entered the kitchen. Seeing Marche-à-Terre among them Pille-Miche discontinued his search, after casting upon d'Orgemont a look that conveyed the wrath of his balked covetousness.

"Marie Lambrequin has come to life!" cried Marche-à-Terre, proclaiming by his manner that all other interests were of no account beside this great piece of news.

"I'm not surprised," said Pille-Miche, "he took the sacrament so often; the good God belonged to him."

"Ha! ha!" observed Mène-à-Bien, "that did n't stand him in anything at his death. He had n't received absolution before the affair at La Pèlerine. He had cheapened Goguelu's daughter, and was living in mortal sin. The Abbé Gudin said he'd have to roam round two months as a ghost before he could come to life. We saw him pass us,—he was pale, he was cold, he was thin, he smelt of the cemetery."

“And his Reverence says that if a ghost gets hold of a living man he can force him to be his companion,” said the fourth Chouan.

The grotesque appearance of the last speaker drew Marche-à-Terre from the pious reflections he had been making on the accomplishment of this miracle of coming to life which, according to the Abbé Gudin would happen to every true defender of religion and the king.

“You see, Galope-Chopine,” he said to the fourth man gravely, “what comes of omitting even the smallest duty commanded by our holy religion. It is a warning to us, given by Saint Anne of Auray, to be rigorous with ourselves for the slightest sin. Your cousin Pille-Miche has asked the Gars to give you the surveillance of Fougères, and the Gars consents, and you’ll be well paid — but you know with what flour we bake a traitor’s bread.”

“Yes, Monsieur Marche-à-Terre.”

“And you know why I tell you that. Some say you like cider and gambling, but you can’t play heads or tails now, remember; you must belong to us only, or —”

“By your leave, Monsieur Marche-à-Terre, cider and stakes are two good things which don’t hinder a man’s salvation.”

“If my cousin commits any folly,” said Pille-Miche, “it will be out of ignorance.”

“In any way he commits it, if harm comes,” said Marche-à-Terre, in a voice which made the arched roof tremble, “my gun won’t miss him. You will answer for him to me,” he added, turning to Pille-Miche; “for if he does wrong I shall take it out on the thing that fills your goatskin.”

“But, Monsieur Marche-à-Terre, with all due re-

spect," said Galope-Chopine, "have n't you sometimes taken a counterfeit Chouan for a real one."

"My friend," said Marche-à-Terre in a curt tone, "don't let that happen in your case, or I'll cut you in two like a turnip. As to the emissaries of the Gars, they all carry his glove, but since that affair at La Vivetière the Grande Garce has added a green ribbon to it."

Pille-Miche nudged his comrade by the elbow and showed him d'Orgemont, who was pretending to be asleep; but Pille-Miche and Marche-à-Terre both knew by experience that no one ever slept by the corner of their fire, and though the last words said to Galope-Chopine were almost whispered, they must have been heard by the victim, and the four Chouans looked at him fixedly, thinking perhaps that fear had deprived him of his senses.

Suddenly, at a slight sign from Marche-à-Terre, Pille-Miche pulled off d'Orgemont's shoes and stockings, Mène-à-Bien and Galope-Chopine seized him round the body and carried him to the fire. Then Marche-à-Terre took one of the thongs that tied the fagots and fastened the miser's feet to the crane. These actions and the horrible celerity with which they were done brought cries from the victim, which became heart-rending when Pille-Miche gathered the burning sticks under his legs.

"My friends, my good friends," screamed d'Orgemont, "you hurt me, you kill me! I'm a Christian like you."

"You lie in your throat!" replied Marche-à-Terre. "Your brother denied God; and as for you, you bought the abbey of Juvigny. The Abbé Gudin says we can roast apostates when we find them."

“ But, my brothers in God, I don’t refuse to pay.”

“ We gave you two weeks, and it is now two months, and Galope-Chopine here has n’t received the money.”

“ Have n’t you received any of it, Galope-Chopine?” asked the miser, in despair.

“ None of it, Monsieur d’Orgemont,” replied Galope-Chopine, frightened.

The cries, which had sunk into groans, continuous as the rattle in a dying throat, now began again with dreadful violence. Accustomed to such scenes, the four Chouans looked at d’Orgemont, who was twisting and howling, so coolly that they seemed like travellers watching before an inn fire till the roast meat was done enough to eat.

“ I’m dying, I’m dying!” cried the victim, “and you won’t get my money.”

In spite of these agonizing cries, Pille-Miche saw that the fire did not yet scorch the skin; he drew the sticks cleverly together so as to make a slight flame. On this d’Orgemont called out in a quavering voice: “ My friends, unbind me! How much do you want? A hundred crowns — a thousand crowns — ten thousand crowns — a hundred thousand crowns — I offer you two hundred thousand crowns!”

The voice became so lamentable that Mademoiselle de Verneuil forgot her own danger and uttered an exclamation.

“ Who spoke?” asked Marche-à-Terre.

The Chouans looked about them with terrified eyes. These men, so brave in fight, were unable to face a ghost. Pille-Miche alone continued to listen to the promises which the flames were now extracting from his victim.

"Five hundred thousand crowns — yes, I'll give them," cried the victim.

"Well, where are they?" answered Pille-Miche, tranquilly.

"Under the first apple-tree — Holy Virgin! at the bottom of the garden to the left — you are brigands — thieves! Ah! I'm dying — there's ten thousand francs —"

"Francs! we don't want francs," said Marche-à-Terre; "those Republican coins have pagan figures which ought n't to pass."

"They are not francs, they are good louis d'or. But oh! undo me, unbind me! I've told you where my life is — my money."

The four Chouans looked at each other as if thinking which of their number they could trust sufficiently to disinter the money.

The cannibal cruelty of the scene so horrified Mademoiselle de Verneuil that she could bear it no longer. Though doubtful whether the rôle of ghost, which her pale face and the Chouan superstitions evidently assigned to her, would carry her safely through the danger, she called out, courageously, "Do you not fear God's anger? Unbind him, brutes!"

The Chouans raised their heads and saw in the air above them two eyes which shone like stars, and they fled, terrified. Mademoiselle de Verneuil sprang into the kitchen, ran to d'Orgemont, and pulled him so violently from the crane that the thong broke. Then with the blade of her dagger she cut the cords which bound him. When the miser was free and on his feet, the first expression of his face was a painful but sardonic grin.

"Apple-tree! yes, go to the apple-tree, you brig-

ands," he said. "Ho, ho! this is the second time I've fooled them. They won't get a third chance at me."

So saying, he caught Mademoiselle de Verneuil's hand, drew her under the mantel-shelf to the back of the hearth in a way to avoid disturbing the fire, which covered only a small part of it; then he touched a spring; the iron back was lifted, and when their enemies returned to the kitchen the heavy door of the hiding-place had already fallen noiselessly. Mademoiselle de Verneuil then understood the carp-like movements she had seen the miser making.

"The ghost has taken the Blue with him," cried the voice of Marche-à-Terre.

The fright of the Chouans must have been great, for the words were followed by a stillness so profound that d'Orgemont and his companion could hear them muttering to themselves: "Ave, sancta Anna Auriaca gratiâ plena, Dominus tecum," etc.

"They are praying, the fools!" cried d'Orgemont.

"Hush! are not you afraid they will discover us?" said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, checking her companion.

The old man's laugh dissipated her fears.

"That iron back is set in a wall of granite two feet thick," he said. "We can hear them, but they can't hear us."

Then he took the hand of his preserver and placed it near a crevice through which a current of fresh air was blowing. She then perceived that the opening was made in the shaft of the chimney.

"Ai! ai!" cried d'Orgemont. "The devil! how my legs smart!"

The Chouans, having finished their prayer, departed, and the old miser again caught the hand of his com-

panion and helped her to climb some narrow winding steps cut in the granite wall. When they had mounted some twenty of these steps the gleam of a lamp dimly lighted their heads. The miser stopped, turned to his companion, examined her face as if it were a bank note he was doubtful about cashing, and heaved a heavy sigh.

"By bringing you here," he said, after a moment's silence, "I have paid you in full for the service you did me; I don't see why I should give you —"

"Monsieur, I ask nothing of you," she said.

These words, and also, perhaps, the disdainful expression on the beautiful face, reassured the old man, for he answered, not without a sigh, "Ah! if you take it that way, I have gone too far not to continue on."

He politely assisted Marie to climb a few more steps rather strangely constructed, and half willingly, half reluctantly, ushered her into a small closet about four feet square, lighted by a lamp hanging from the ceiling. It was easy to see that the miser had made preparations to spend more than one day in this retreat if the events of the civil war compelled him to hide himself.

"Don't brush against that wall, you might whiten yourself," said d'Orgemont suddenly, as he hurriedly put his hand between the girl's shawl and the stones which seemed to have been lately whitewashed. The old man's action produced quite another effect from that he had intended. Marie looked about her and saw in one corner a sort of projection, the shape of which forced from her a cry of terror, for she fancied it was that of a human being standing erect and mortared into the wall. D'Orgemont made a violent sign to her to hold her tongue, and his little eyes of a porcelain blue showed as much fear as those of his companion.

"Fool! do you think I murdered him? It is the body of my brother," and the old man gave a lugubrious sigh. "He was the first sworn-in priest; and this was the only asylum where he was safe against the fury of the Chouans and the other priests. He was my elder brother, and he alone had the patience to teach me the decimal calculus. Oh! he was a good priest! He was economical and laid by money. It is four years since he died; I don't know what was the matter with him; perhaps it was that priests are so in the habit of kneeling down to pray that he couldn't get accustomed to standing upright here as I do. I walled him up there; *they'd* have dug him up elsewhere. Some day perhaps I can put him in holy ground, as he used to call it, — poor man, he only took the oath out of fear."

A tear rolled from the hard eyes of the little old man, whose rusty wig suddenly seemed less hideous to the girl, and she turned her eyes respectfully away from his distress. But, in spite of these tender reminiscences, d'Orgemont kept on saying, "Don't go near the wall, you might —"

His eyes never ceased to watch hers, hoping thus to prevent her from examining too closely the walls of the closet, where the close air was scarcely enough to inflate the lungs. Marie succeeded, however, in getting a sufficiently good look in spite of her Argus, and she came to the conclusion that the strange protuberances in the walls were neither more nor less than sacks of coin which the miser had placed there and plastered up.

Old d'Orgemont was now in a state of almost grotesque bewilderment. The pain in his legs, the terror he felt at seeing a human being in the midst of his

boards, could be read in every wrinkle of his face, and yet at the same time his eyes expressed, with unaccustomed fire, a lively emotion excited in him by the presence of his liberator, whose white and rosy cheek invited kisses, and whose velvety black eye sent waves of blood to his heart, so hot that he was much in doubt whether they were signs of life or of death.

“Are you married?” he asked, in a trembling voice.

“No,” she said, smiling.

“I have a little something,” he continued, heaving a sigh, “though I am not so rich as people think for. A young girl like you must love diamonds, trinkets, carriages, money. I’ve got all that to give — after my death. Hey! if you will —”

The old man’s eyes were so shrewd and betrayed such calculation in this ephemeral love that Mademoiselle de Verneuil, as she shook her head in sign of refusal, felt that his desire to marry her was solely to bury his secret in another himself.

“Money!” she said, with a look of scorn which made him satisfied and angry both; “money is nothing to me. You would be three times as rich as you are, if you had all the gold that I have refused —” she stopped suddenly.

“Don’t go near that wall, or —”

“But I hear a voice,” she said; “it echoes through that wall, — a voice that is more to me than all your riches.”

Before the miser could stop her Marie had laid her hand on a small colored engraving of Louis XV. on horseback; to her amazement it turned, and she saw, in a room beneath her, the Marquis de Montauran, who was loading a musket. The opening, hidden by a little

panel on which the picture was gummed, seemed to form some ornament in the ceiling of the adjoining chamber, which, no doubt, was the bedroom of the royalist general. D'Orgemont closed the opening with much precaution, and looked at the girl sternly.

"Don't say a word if you love your life. You haven't thrown your grappling-iron on a worthless building. Do you know that the Marquis de Monauran is worth more than one hundred thousand francs a year from lands which have not yet been confiscated? And I read in the *Primidi de l'Ille-et-Vilaine* a decree of the Consuls putting an end to confiscation. Ha! ha! you'll think the Gars a prettier fellow than ever, won't you? Your eyes are shining like two new louis d'or."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil's face was, indeed, keenly excited when she heard that well-known voice so near her. Since she had been standing there, erect, in the midst as it were of a silver mine, the spring of her mind, held down by these strange events, recovered itself. She seemed to have formed some sinister resolution and to perceive a means of carrying it out.

"There is no return from such contempt," she was saying to herself; "and if he cannot love me, I will kill him — no other woman shall have him."

"No, abbé, no!" cried the young chief, in a loud voice which was heard through the panel, "it must be so."

"Monsieur le marquis," replied the Abbé Gudin, aughtily; "you will scandalize all Brittany if you give that ball at Saint James. It is preaching, not dancing, which will rouse our villagers. Take guns, not fiddles."

“Abbé, you have sense enough to know that it is not in a general assembly of our partisans that I can learn to know these people, or judge of what I may be able to undertake with them. A supper is better for examining faces than all the spying in the world, of which, by the bye, I have a horror; they can be made to talk with glasses in their hand.”

Marie quivered, as she listened, and conceived the idea of going to the ball and there avenging herself.

“Do you take me for an idiot with your sermon against dancing?” continued Montauran. “Wouldn’t you yourself dance a reel if it would restore your order under its new name of Fathers of the Faith? Don’t you know that Bretons come away from the mass and go to dancing? Are you aware that Messieurs Hyde de Neuville and d’Andigné had a conference, five days ago, with the First Consul, on the question of restoring his Majesty Louis XVIII.? Ah, monsieur, the princes are deceived as to the true state of France. The devotions which uphold them are solely those of rank. Abbé, if I have set my feet in blood, at least I will not go into it to my middle without full knowledge of what I do. I am devoted to the king, but not to four hot-heads, not to a man crippled with debt like Rifoël, not to ‘chauffeurs,’ not to —”

“Say frankly, monsieur, not to abbés who force contributions on the highway to carry on the war,” retorted the Abbé Gudin.

“Why should I not say it?” replied the marquis, sharply; “and I’ll say, further, that the great and heroic days of La Vendée are over.”

“Monsieur le marquis, we can perform miracles without you.”

"Yes, like that of Marie Lambrequin, whom I hear you have brought to life," said the marquis, smiling. "Come, come, let us have no rancor, abbé. I know that you run all risks and would shoot a Blue as readily as you say an *oremus*. God willing, I hope to make you assist with a mitre on your head at the king's coronation."

This last remark must have had some magic power, for the click of a musket was heard as the abbé exclaimed, "I have fifty cartridges in my pocket, monsieur le marquis, and my life is the king's."

"He's a debtor of mine," whispered the usurer to Marie. "I don't mean the five or six hundred crowns he has borrowed, but a debt of blood which I hope to make him pay. He can never suffer as much evil as I wish him, the damned Jesuit! He swore the death of my brother, and raised the country against him. Why? Because the poor man was afraid of the new laws." Then, after applying his ear to another part of his hiding-place, he added, "They are all decamping, those brigands. I suppose they are going to do some other miracle elsewhere. I only hope they won't bid me good-by as they did the last time, by setting fire to my house."

After the lapse of about half an hour, during which time the usurer and Mademoiselle de Verneuil looked at each other as if they were studying a picture, the coarse, gruff voice of Galope-Chopine was heard saying, in a muffled tone: "There's no longer any danger, Monsieur d'Orgemont. But this time, you must allow that I have earned my thirty crowns."

"My dear," said the miser to Marie, "swear to shut your eyes."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil placed one hand over her eyelids; but for greater security d'Orgemont blew out the lamp, took his liberator by the hand, and helped her to make seven or eight steps along a difficult passage. At the end of some minutes he gently removed her hand, and she found herself in the very room the Marquis de Montauran had just quitted, and which was, in fact, the miser's own bedroom.

"My dear girl," said the old man, "you can safely go now. Don't look about you that way. I dare say you have no money with you. Here are ten crowns; they are a little shaved, but they'll pass. When you leave the garden you will see a path which leads straight to the town, or, as they say now, the district. But the Chouans will be at Fougères, and it is to be presumed that you can't get back there at once. You may want some safe place to hide in. Remember what I say to you, but don't make use of it unless in some great emergency. You will see on the road which leads to Nid-aux-Crocs through the Val de Gibarry, a farm-house belonging to Cibot — otherwise called Galope-Chopine. Go in, and say to his wife: 'Good-day, Becanière,' and Barbette will hide you. If Galope-Chopine discovers you he will either take you for the ghost, if it is dark, or ten crowns will master him if it is light. Adieu, our account is squared. But if you choose," he added, waving his hand about him, "all this is yours."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil gave the strange old man a look of thanks, and succeeded in extracting a sigh from him, expressing a variety of emotions.

"You will of course return me my ten crowns; and please remark that I ask no interest. You can pay them to my credit with Maître Patrat, the notary at

Fougères, who would draw our marriage contract if you consented to be mine. Adieu."

"Adieu," she said, smiling and kissing her hand.

"If you ever want money," he called after her, "I'll lend it to you at five per cent; yes, only five — did I say five? — why, she's gone! That girl looks to me like a good one; nevertheless, I'll change the secret opening of my chimney."

Then he took a twelve-pound loaf and a ham, and returned to his hiding place.

As Mademoiselle de Verneuil walked through the country she seemed to breathe a new life. The freshness of the night revived her after the fiery experience of the last few hours. She tried to follow the path explained to her by d'Orgemont, but the darkness became so dense after the moon had gone down that she was forced to walk hap-hazard, blindly. Presently the fear of falling down some precipice seized her and saved her life, for she stopped suddenly, fancying the ground would disappear before her if she made another step. A cool breeze lifting her hair, the murmur of the river, and her instinct all combined to warn her that she was probably on the verge of the Saint-Sulpice rocks. She slipped her arm round a tree and waited for the dawn with keen anxiety, for she heard a noise of arms and horses and human voices; she was grateful to the darkness which saved her from the Chouans, who were evidently, as the miser had said, surrounding Fougères.

Like fires lit at night as signals of liberty, a few gleams, faintly crimsoned, began to show upon the summits, while the bases of the mountains still retained the bluish tints which contrasted with the rosy clouds

that were floating in the valley. Soon a ruby disk rose slowly on the horizon and the skies greeted it; the varied landscape, the bell-tower of Saint-Léonard, the rocks, the meadows buried in shadow, all insensibly reappeared, and the trees on the summits were defined against the skies in the rising glow. The sun freed itself with a graceful spring from the ribbons of flame and ochre and sapphire. Its vivid light took level lines from hill to hill and flowed into the vales. The dusk dispersed, day mastered Nature. A sharp breeze crisped the air, the birds sang, life wakened everywhere. But the girl had hardly time to cast her eyes over the whole of this wondrous landscape before, by a phenomenon not infrequent in these cool regions, the mists spread themselves in sheets, filled the valleys, and rose to the tops of the mountains, burying the great valley beneath a mantle of snow. Mademoiselle de Verneuil fancied for a moment she saw a *mer de glace*, like those of the Alps: Then the vaporous atmosphere rolled like the waves of ocean, lifted impenetrable billows which softly swayed, undulated, and were violently whirled, catching from the sun's rays a vivid rosy tint, and showing here and there in their depths the transparencies of a lake of molten silver. Suddenly the north wind swept this phantasmagoric scene and scattered the mists which laid a dew full of oxygen on the meadows.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil was now able to distinguish a dark mass of men on the rocks of Fougères. Seven or eight hundred Chouans were running like ants through the suburb of Saint-Sulpice. The sleeping town would certainly have been overpowered in spite of its fortifications and its old gray towers, if Hulot had

not been alert. A battery, concealed on a height at the farther end of the basin formed by the ramparts, replied to the first fire of the Chouans by taking them diagonally on the road to the castle. The balls swept the road. Then a company of Blues made a sortie from the Saint-Sulpice gate, profited by the surprise of the royalists to form in line upon the high-road, and poured a murderous fire upon them. The Chouans made no attempt to resist, seeing that the ramparts of the castle were covered with soldiers, and that the guns of the fortress sufficiently protected the Republican advance.

Meantime, however, other Chouans, masters of the little valley of the Nançon, had swarmed up the rocks and reached the Promenade, which was soon covered with goatskins, giving it to Marie's eyes the appearance of a thatched roof, brown with age. At the same moment loud reports were heard from the part of the town which overlooks the valley of Couësnon. Evidently, Fougères was attacked on all sides and completely surrounded. Flames rising on the western side of the rock showed that the Chouans were setting fire to the suburbs ; but these soon ceased, and a column of black smoke which succeeded them showed that the fire was extinguished. Brown and white clouds again hid the scene from Mademoiselle de Verneuil, but they were clouds of smoke from the fire and powder, which the wind dispersed. The Republican commander, as soon as he saw his first orders admirably executed, changed the direction of his battery so as to sweep, successively, the valley of the Nançon, the Queen's Staircase, and the base of the rock of Fougères. Two guns posted at the gate of Saint-Léonard scattered the ant-hill of Chouans who had seized that position, and the national

guard of the town, rushing in haste to the square before the Church, succeeded in dislodging the last enemy. The fight lasted only half an hour, and cost the Blues a hundred men. The Chouans, beaten on all sides, retreated under orders from the Gars, whose bold attempt failed (although he did not know this) in consequence of the massacre at La Vivetière, which had brought Hulot secretly and in all haste to Fougères. The artillery had arrived only that evening, and the news had not reached Montauran ; otherwise, he would certainly have abandoned an enterprise which, if it failed, could only have had bad results. As soon as he heard the guns the marquis knew it would be madness to continue, out of mere pride, a surprise which had missed fire. Therefore, not to lose men uselessly, he sent at once to all points of the attack, ordering an immediate retreat. The commandant, seeing his adversary on the rocks of Saint-Sulpice surrounded by a council of men, endeavored to pour a volley upon him ; but the spot was cleverly selected, and the young leader was out of danger in a moment. Hulot now changed parts with his opponent and became the aggressor. At the first sign of the Gars' intention, the company stationed under the walls of the castle were ordered to cut off the Chouans' retreat by seizing the upper outlet of the valley of the Nançon.

Notwithstanding her desire for revenge, Mademoiselle de Verneuil's sympathies were with the men commanded by her lover, and she turned hastily to see if the other end of the valley were clear for them ; but the Blues, conquerors no doubt on the opposite side of Fougères, were returning from the valley of Couësson and taking possession of the Nid-aux-Crocs and that portion

of the Saint-Sulpice rocks which overhang the lower end of the valley of the Nançon. The Chouans, thus hemmed in to the narrow fields of the gorge, seemed in danger of perishing to the last man, so cleverly and sagaciously were the commandant's measures taken. But Hulot's cannon were powerless at these two points ; and here, the town of Fougères being quite safe, began one of those desperate struggles which denoted the character of Chouan warfare.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil now comprehended the presence of the masses of men she had seen as she left the town, the meeting of the leaders at d'Orgemont's house, and all the other events of the night, wondering how she herself had escaped so many dangers. The attack, prompted by desperation, interested her so keenly that she stood motionless, watching the living pictures as they presented themselves to her sight. Presently the struggle at the foot of the mountain had a deeper interest for her. Seeing the Blues almost masters of the Chouans, the marquis and his friends rushed into the valley of the Nançon to support their men. The rocks were now covered with straggling groups of furious combatants deciding the question of life or death on a ground and with weapons that were more favorable to the Goatskins. Slowly this moving arena widened. The Chouans, recovering themselves, gained the rocks, thanks to the shrubs and bushes which grew here and there among them. For a moment Mademoiselle de Verneuil felt alarmed as she saw, rather late, her enemies swarming over the summit and defending the dangerous paths by which alone she could descend. Every issue on the mountain was occupied by one or other of the two parties ; afraid of encoun-

tering them she left the tree behind which she had been sheltering, and began to run in the direction of the farm which d'Orgemont had mentioned to her. After running some time on the slope of Saint-Sulpice which overlooks the valley of Couësnon she saw a cow-shed in the distance, and thought it must belong to the house of Galope-Chopine, who had doubtless left his wife at home and alone during the fight. Mademoiselle de Verneuil hoped to be able to pass a few hours in this retreat until it was possible for her to return to Fougères without danger. According to all appearance Hulot was to triumph. The Chouans were retreating so rapidly that she heard firing all about her, and the fear of being shot made her hasten to the cottage, the chimney of which was her landmark. The path she was following ended at a sort of shed covered with a furze-roof, supported by four stout trees with the bark still on them. A mud wall formed the back of this shed, under which were a cider-mill, a flail to thresh buckwheat, and several agricultural implements. She stopped before one of the posts, unwilling to cross the dirty bog which formed a sort of courtyard to the house which, in her Parisian ignorance, she had taken for a stable.

The cabin, protected from the north wind by an eminence towering above the roof, which rested against it, was not without a poetry of its own; for the tender shoots of elms, heather, and various rock-flowers wreathed it with garlands. A rustic staircase, constructed between the shed and the house, enabled the inhabitants to go to the top of the rock and breathe a purer air. On the left, the eminence sloped abruptly down, giving to view a series of fields, the first of which

belonged no doubt to this farm. These fields were like polders, separated by banks which were planted with rees. The road which led to them was barred by the trunk of an old, half-rotten tree, — a Breton method of enclosure the name of which may furnish, further on, a digression which will complete the characterization of this region. Between the stairway cut in the schist rock and the path closed by this old tree, in front of the marsh and beneath the overhanging rock, several granite blocks roughly hewn, and piled one upon the other, formed the four corners of the cottage and held up the planks, cobblestones, and pitch amalgam of which the walls were made. The fact that one half of the roof was covered with furze instead of thatch, and the other with shingles or bits of board cut into the form of slates, showed that the building was in two parts; one half, with a broken hurdle for a door, served as a stable, the other half was the dwelling of the owner. Though this hut owed to the neighborhood of the town a few improvements which were wholly absent from such buildings that were five or six miles further off, it showed plainly enough the instability of domestic life and habits to which the wars and customs of feudality had reduced the serf; even to this day many of the peasants of those parts call a seignorial château, “The dwelling.”

While examining the place, with an astonishment we can readily conceive, Mademoiselle de Verneuil noticed here and there in the filth of the courtyard a few bits of granite so placed as to form stepping-stones to the house. Hearing the sound of musketry that was evidently coming nearer, she jumped from stone to stone, as if crossing a rivulet, to ask shelter. The house was

closed by a door opening in two parts ; the lower one of wood, heavy and massive, the upper one a shutter which served as a window. In many of the smaller towns of France the shops have the same type of door though far more decorated, the lower half possessing a call-bell. The door in question opened with a wooden latch worthy of the golden age, and the upper part was never closed except at night, for it was the only opening through which daylight could enter the room. There was, to be sure, a clumsy window, but the glass was thick like the bottom of a bottle, and the lead which held the panes in place took so much room that the opening seemed intended to intercept the light rather than admit it. As soon as Mademoiselle de Verneuil had turned the creaking hinges of the lower door she smelt an intolerable ammoniacal odor, and saw that the beasts in the stable had kicked through the inner partition which separated the stable from the dwelling. The interior of the farmhouse, for such it was, did not belie its exterior.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil was asking herself how it was possible for human beings to live in such habitual filth, when a ragged little boy about eight or nine years old suddenly presented his fresh and rosy face, with a pair of fat cheeks, lively eyes, ivory teeth, and a mass of fair hair, which fell in curls upon his half-naked shoulders. His limbs were vigorous, and his attitude had the charm of that amazement and naïve curiosity which widens a child's eyes. The little fellow was a picture of beauty.

"Where is your mother?" said Marie, in a gentle voice, stooping to kiss him between the eyes.

After receiving her kiss the child slipped away like

an eel, and disappeared behind a muck-heap which was piled at the top of a mound between the path and the house; for, like many Breton farmers who have a system of agriculture that is all their own, Galope-Chopine put his manure in an elevated spot, so that by the time it was wanted for use the rains had deprived it of all its virtue. Alone for a few minutes, Marie had time to make an inventory. The room in which she waited for Barbette was the whole house. The most obvious and sumptuous object was a vast fireplace with a *mantle*-shelf of blue granite. The etymology of that word was shown by a strip of green serge, edged with a pale-green ribbon, cut in scallops, which covered and overhung the whole shelf, on which stood a colored plaster cast of the Holy Virgin. On the pedestal of the statuette were two lines of a religious poem very popular in Brittany:—

“I am the mother of God,
Protectress of the sod.”

Behind the Virgin a hideous image, daubed with red and blue under pretence of painting, represented Saint-Labre. A green serge bed of the shape called “tomb,” a clumsy cradle, a spinning-wheel, common chairs, and a carved chest on which lay utensils, were about the whole of Galope-Chopine’s domestic possessions. In front of the window stood a chestnut table flanked by two benches of the same wood, to which the sombre light coming through the thick panes gave the tone of nahogany. An immense cask of cider, under the bung of which Mademoiselle de Verneuil noticed a pool of yellow mud, which had decomposed the flooring, although it was made of scraps of granite conglomerated in clay, proved that the master of the house had a right

to his Chouan name, and that the pints galloped down either his own throat or that of his friends. Two enormous jugs full of cider stood on the table. Marie's attention, caught at first by the innumerable spider's-webs which hung from the roof, was fixing itself on these pitchers when the noise of fighting, growing more and more distinct, impelled her to find a hiding-place, without waiting for the woman of the house, who, however, appeared at that moment.

"Good-morning, Becanière," said Marie, restraining a smile at the appearance of a person who bore some resemblance to the heads which architects attach to window-casings.

"Ha! you come from d'Orgemont?" answered Barbette, in a tone that was far from cordial.

"Yes, where can you hide me? for the Chouans are close by —"

"There," replied Barbette, as much amazed at the beauty as by the strange apparel of a being she could hardly believe to be of her own sex, — "there, in the priest's hiding-place."

She took her to the head of the bed, and was putting her behind it, when they were both startled by the noise of a man springing into the courtyard. Barbette had scarcely time to drop the curtain of the bed and fold it about the girl before she was face to face with a fugitive Chouan.

"Where can I hide, old woman? I am the Comte de Bauvan," said the new-comer.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil quivered as she recognized the voice of the belated guest, whose words, still a secret to her, brought about the catastrophe of La Vivetière,

“Alas! monseigneur, don’t you see, I have no place? What I’d better do is to keep outside and watch that no one gets in. If the Blues come, I’ll let you know. If I stay here, and they find me with you, they’ll burn my house down.”

Barbette left the hut, feeling herself incapable of settling the interests of two enemies who, in virtue of the double rôle her husband was playing, had an equal right to her hiding-place.

“I’ve only two shots left,” said the count, in despair. “It will be very unlucky if those fellows turn back now and take a fancy to look under this bed.”

He placed his gun gently against the headboard behind which Marie was standing among the folds of the green serge, and stooped to see if there was room for him under the bed. He would infallibly have seen her feet, but she, rendered desperate by her danger, seized his gun, jumped quickly into the room, and threatened him. The count broke into a peal of laughter when he caught sight of her, for, in order to hide herself, Marie had taken off her broad-brimmed Chouan hat, and her hair was escaping, in heavy curls, from the lace scarf which she had worn on leaving home.

“Don’t laugh, monsieur le comte; you are my prisoner. If you make the least movement, you shall know what an offended woman is capable of doing.”

As the count and Marie stood looking at each other with differing emotions, confused voices were heard without among the rocks, calling out, “Save the Gars! spread out, spread out, save the Gars!”

Barbette’s voice, calling to her boy, was heard above the tumult with very different sensations by the two

enemies, to whom Barbette was really speaking instead of to her son.

"Don't you see the Blues?" she cried, sharply. "Come here, you little scamp, or I shall be after you. Do you want to be shot? Come, hide, quick!"

While these things took place rapidly a Blue jumped into the marshy courtyard.

"Beau-Pied!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

Beau-Pied, hearing her voice, rushed into the cottage, and aimed at the count.

"Aristocrat!" he cried, "don't stir, or I'll demolish you in a wink, like the Bastille."

"Monsieur Beau-Pied," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, in a persuasive voice, "you will be answerable to me for this prisoner. Do as you like with him now, but you must return him to me safe and sound at Fougères."

"Enough, madame!"

"Is the road to Fougères clear?"

"Yes, it's safe enough — unless the Chouans come to life."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil picked up the count's gun gayly, and smiled satirically as she said to her prisoner, "Adieu, monsieur le comte, au revoir!"

Then she darted down the path, having replaced the broad hat upon her head.

"I have learned too late," said the count, "not to joke about the virtue of a woman who has none."

"Aristocrat!" cried Beau-Pied, sternly, "if you don't want me to send you to your *ci-devant* paradise, you will not say a word against that beautiful lady."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil returned to Fougères by the paths which connects the rocks of Saint-Sulpice

with the Nid-aux-Crocs. When she reached the latter height and had threaded the winding way cut in its rough granite, she stopped to admire the pretty valley of the Nançon, lately so turbulent and now so tranquil. Seen from that point, the vale was like a street of verdure. Mademoiselle de Verneuil re-entered the town by the Porte Saint-Léonard. The inhabitants, still uneasy about the fighting, which, judging by the distant firing, was still going on, were waiting the return of the National Guard, to judge of their losses. Seeing the girl in her strange costume, her hair dishevelled, a gun in her hand, her shawl and gown whitened against the walls, soiled with mud and wet with dew, the curiosity of the people was keenly excited, — all the more because the power, beauty, and singularity of this young Parisian had been the subject of much discussion.

Francine, full of dreadful fears, had waited for her mistress throughout the night, and when she saw her she began to speak; but Marie, with a kindly gesture, silenced her.

“I am not dead, my child,” she said. “Ah!” she added, after a pause, “I wanted emotions when I left Paris, and I have had them!”

Francine asked if she should get her some food, observing that she must be in great need of it.

“No, no; a bath, a bath!” cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil. “I must dress at once.”

Francine was not a little surprised when her mistress required her to unpack the most elegant of the dresses she had brought with her. Having bathed and breakfasted, Marie made her toilet with all the minute care which a woman gives to that important act when she expects to meet the eyes of her lover in a ball-room.

Francine could not explain to herself the mocking gayety of her mistress. It was not the joy of love, — a woman never mistakes that; it was rather an expression of concentrated maliciousness, which to Francine's mind boded evil. Marie herself drew the curtains of the window from which the glorious panorama could be seen, then she moved the sofa to the chimney corner, turning it so that the light would fall becomingly on her face; then she told Francine to fetch flowers, that the room might have a festive air; and when they came she herself directed their arrangement in a picturesque manner. Giving a last glance of satisfaction at these various preparations she sent Francine to the commandant with a request that he would bring her prisoner to her; then she lay down luxuriously on a sofa, partly to rest, and partly to throw herself into an attitude of graceful weakness, the power of which is irresistible in certain women. A soft languor, the seductive pose of her feet just seen below the drapery of her gown, the plastic ease of her body, the curving of the throat, — all, even the droop of her slender fingers as they hung from the pillow like the buds of a bunch of jasmine, combined with her eyes to produce seduction. She burned certain perfumes to fill the air with those subtle emanations which affect men's fibres powerfully, and often prepare the way for conquests which women seek to make without seeming to desire them. Presently the heavy step of the old soldier resounded in the adjoining room.

"Well, commandant, where is my captive?" she said.

"I have just ordered a picket of twelve men to shoot him, being taken with arms in his hand."

"Why have you disposed of my prisoner?" she

asked. "Listen to me, commandant; surely, if I can trust your face, the death of a man *after* a fight is no particular satisfaction to you. Well, then, give my Chouan a reprieve, for which I will be responsible, and let me see him. I assure you that aristocrat has become essential to me, and he can be made to further the success of our plans. Besides, to shoot a mere amateur in Chouannerie would be as absurd as to fire on a balloon when a pinprick would disinflate it. For heaven's sake leave cruelty to the aristocracy. Republicans ought to be generous. Would n't you and yours have forgiven the victims of Quiberon? Come, send your twelve men to patrol the town, and dine with me and bring the prisoner. There is only an hour of daylight left, and don't you see," she added smiling, "that if you are too late, my toilet will have lost its effect?"

"But, mademoiselle," said the commandant, amazed.

"Well, what? But I know what you mean. Don't be anxious; the count shall not escape. Sooner or later that big butterfly will burn himself in your fire."

The commandant shrugged his shoulders slightly, with the air of a man who is forced to obey, whether he will or no, the commands of a pretty woman; and he returned in about half an hour, followed by the Comte de Bauvan.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil feigned surprise and seemed confused that the count should see her in such a negligent attitude; then, after reading in his eyes that her first effect was produced, she rose and busied herself about her guests with well-bred courtesy. There was nothing studied or forced in her motions, smiles, behavior, or voice, nothing that betrayed premeditation or purpose. All was harmonious; no part was over-

acted ; an observer could not have supposed that she affected the manners of a society in which she had not lived. When the Royalist and the Republican were seated she looked sternly at the count. He, on his part, knew women sufficiently well to feel certain that the offence he had committed against this woman was equivalent to a sentence of death. But in spite of this conviction, and without seeming either gay or gloomy, he had the air of a man who did not take such serious results into consideration ; in fact, he really thought it ridiculous to fear death in presence of a pretty woman. Marie's stern manner roused ideas in his mind.

"Who knows," thought he, "whether a count's coronet would n't please her as well as that of her lost marquis? Montauran is as lean as a nail, while I —" and he looked himself over with an air of satisfaction. "At any rate I should save my head."

These diplomatic reflections were wasted. The passion the count proposed to feign for Mademoiselle de Verneuil became a violent caprice, which the dangerous creature did her best to heighten.

"Monsieur le comte," she said, "you are my prisoner, and I have the right to dispose of you. Your execution cannot take place without my consent, and I have too much curiosity to let them shoot you at present."

"And suppose I am obstinate enough to keep silence?" he replied gayly.

"With an honest woman, perhaps, but with a woman of the town, no, no, monsieur le comte, impossible!" These words, full of bitter sarcasm, were hissed, as Sully says, in speaking of the Duchesse de Beaufort, from so sharp a beak that the count, amazed, merely looked at

is antagonist. "But," she continued, with a scornful lance, "not to contradict you, if I am a creature of that kind I will act like one. Here is your gun," and she offered him his weapon with a mocking air.

"On the honor of a gentleman, mademoiselle —"

"Ah!" she said, interrupting him, "I have had enough of the honor of gentlemen. It was on the faith of that that I went to La Vivetière. Your leader had sworn to me that I and my escort should be safe there."

"What an infamy!" cried Hulot, contracting his brows.

"The fault lies with monsieur le comte," said Marie, addressing Hulot. "I have no doubt the Gars meant to keep his word, but this gentleman told some calumny about me which confirmed those that Charette's mistress had already invented —"

"Mademoiselle," said the count, much troubled, with my head under the axe I would swear that I said nothing but the truth."

"In saying what?"

"That you were the —"

"Say the word, mistress of —"

"The Marquis de Lenoncourt, the present duke, a friend of mine," replied the count.

"Now I can let you go to execution," she said, without seeming at all agitated by the outspoken reply of the count, who was amazed at the real or pretended indifference with which she heard his statement.

However," she added, laughing, "you have not wronged me more than that friend of whom you suppose me to have been the — Fie! monsieur le comte; surely you used to visit my father, the Duc de Verneuil? Yes? well then —"

Evidently considering Hulot one too many for the confidence she was about to make, Mademoiselle de Verneuil motioned the count to her side, and said a few words in his ear. Monsieur de Bauvan gave a low ejaculation of surprise and looked with bewilderment at Marie, who completed the effect of her words by leaning against the chimney in the artless and innocent attitude of a child.

“Mademoiselle,” cried the count, “I entreat your forgiveness, unworthy as I am of it.”

“I have nothing to forgive,” she replied. “You have no more ground for repentance than you had for the insolent supposition you proclaimed at La Vivetière. But this is a matter beyond your comprehension. Only, remember this, monsieur le comte, the daughter of the Duc de Verneuil has too generous a spirit not to take a lively interest in your fate.”

“Even after I have insulted you?” said the count, with a sort of regret.

“Some are placed so high that insult cannot touch them. Monsieur le comte, — I am one of them.”

As she said the words, the girl assumed an air of pride and nobility which impressed the prisoner and made the whole of this strange intrigue much less clear to Hulot than the old soldier had thought it. He twirled his moustache and looked uneasily at Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who made him a sign, as if to say she was still carrying out her plan.

“Now,” continued Marie, after a pause, “let us dismiss these matters. Francine, my dear, bring lights.”

She adroitly led the conversation to the times which had now, within a few short years, become the “ancien

régime." She brought back that period to the count's mind by the liveliness of her remarks and sketches, and gave him so many opportunities to display his wit, by cleverly throwing repartees in his way, that he ended by thinking he had never been so charming; and that idea having rejuvenated him, he endeavored to inspire this seductive young woman with his own good opinion of himself. The malicious creature practised, in return, every art of her coquetry upon him, all the more adroitly because it was mere play to her. Sometimes she let him think he was making rapid progress, and then, as if surprised at the sentiment she was feeling, she showed a sudden coolness which charmed him, and served to increase imperceptibly his impromptu passion. She was like a fisherman who lifts his line from time to time to see if the fish is biting. The poor count allowed himself to be deceived by the innocent air with which she accepted two or three neatly turned compliments. Emigration, Brittany, the Republic, and the Chouans were far indeed from his thoughts. Hulot sat erect and silent as the god *Thermes*. His want of education made him quite incapable of taking part in a conversation of this kind; he supposed that the talking pair were very witty, but his efforts at comprehension were limited to discovering whether they were plotting against the Republic in covert language.

"Montauran," the count was saying, "has birth and breeding, he is a charming fellow, but he does n't understand gallantry. He is too young to have seen Versailles. His education is deficient. Instead of diplomatically defaming, he strikes a blow. He may be able to love violently, but he will never have that fine flower of breeding in his gallantry which distinguished

Lauzun, Adhémar, Coigny, and so many others ! He has n't the winning art of saying those pretty nothings to women which, after all, they like better than bursts of passion, which soon weary them. Yes, though he has undoubtedly had many love-affairs, he has neither the grace nor the ease that should belong to them."

"I have noticed that myself," said Marie.

"Ah!" thought the count, "there's an inflection in her voice, and a look in her eye which shows me plainly I shall soon be *on terms* with her; and faith! to get her, I'll believe all she wants me to."

He offered her his hand, for dinner was now announced. Mademoiselle de Verneuil did the honors with a politeness and tact which could only have been acquired by the life and training of a court.

"Leave us," she whispered to Hulot as they left the table. "You will only frighten him; whereas, if I am alone with him I shall soon find out all I want to know; he has reached the point where a man tells me everything he thinks, and sees through my eyes only."

"But afterwards?" said Hulot, evidently intending to claim the prisoner.

"Afterwards, he is to be free — free as air," she replied.

"But he was taken with arms in his hand."

"No," she said, making one of those sophistical jokes with which women parry unanswerable arguments, "I had disarmed him. Count," she said, turning back to him as Hulot departed. "I have just obtained your liberty, but — nothing for nothing," she added, laughing, with her head on one side as if to interrogate him.

"Ask all, even my name and my honor," he cried, intoxicated. "I lay them at your feet."

He advanced to seize her hand, trying to make her take his passion for gratitude; but Mademoiselle de Verneuil was not a woman to be thus misled. So, smiling in a way to give some hope to this new lover, she drew back a few steps and said: "You might make me regret my confidence."

"The imagination of a young girl is more rapid than that of a woman," he answered, laughing.

"A young girl has more to lose than a woman."

"True; those who carry a treasure ought to be distrustful."

"Let us quit such conventional language," she said, "and talk seriously. You are to give a ball at Saint-James. I hear that your headquarters, arsenals, and base of supplies are there. When is the ball to be?"

"To-morrow evening."

"You will not be surprised if a slandered woman desires, with a woman's obstinacy, to obtain a public reparation for the insults offered to her, in presence of those who witnessed them. I shall go to your ball. I ask you to give me your protection from the moment I enter the room until I leave it. I ask nothing more than a promise," she added, as he laid his hand on his heart. "I abhor oaths; they are too like precautions. Tell me only that you engage to protect my person from all dangers, criminal or shameful. Promise to repair the wrong you did me, by openly acknowledging that I am the daughter of the Duc de Verneuil; but say nothing of the trials I have borne in being illegitimate, — this will pay your debt to me. Ha! two hours' attendance on a woman in a ball-room is not so dear a ransom for your life, is it? You are not worth a ducat more." Her smile took the insult from her words.

“What do you ask for the gun?” said the count, laughing.

“Oh! more than I do for you.”

“What is it?”

“Secrecy. Believe me, my dear count, a woman is never fathomed except by a woman. I am certain that if you say one word of this, I shall be murdered on my way to that ball. Yesterday I had warning enough. Yes, that woman is quick to act. Ah! I implore you,” she said, “contrive that no harm shall come to me at the ball.”

“You will be there under my protection,” said the count, proudly. “But,” he added, with a doubtful air, “are you coming for the sake of Montauran?”

“You wish to know more than I know myself,” she answered, laughing. “Now go,” she added, after a pause. “I will take you to the gate of the town myself, for this seems to me a cannibal warfare.”

“Then you do feel some interest in me?” exclaimed the count. “Ah! mademoiselle, permit me to hope that you will not be insensible to my friendship—for that sentiment must content me, must it not?” he added with a conceited air.

“Ah! diviner!” she said, putting on the gay expression a woman assumes when she makes an avowal which compromises neither her dignity nor her secret sentiments.

Then, having slipped on a pelisse, she accompanied him as far as the Nid-aux-Crocs. When they reached the end of the path she said, “Monsieur, be absolutely silent on all this; even to the marquis;” and she laid her finger on both lips.

The count, emboldened by so much kindness, took

her hand; she let him do so as though it were a great favor, and he kissed it tenderly.

"Oh! mademoiselle," he cried, on knowing himself beyond all danger, "rely on me for life, for death. Though I owe you a gratitude equal to that I owe my mother, it will be very difficult to restrain my feelings of mere respect."

He sprang into the narrow pathway. After watching him till he reached the rocks of Saint-Sulpice, Marie nodded her head in sign of satisfaction, saying to herself in a low voice: "That fat fellow has given me more than his life for his life! I can make him my creature at a very little cost! Creature or creator, that's all the difference there is between one man and another —"

She did not finish her thought, but with a look of despair she turned and re-entered the Porte Saint-Léonard, where Hulot and Corentin were awaiting her.

"Two more days," she cried, "and then —" She stopped, observing that they were not alone — "he shall fall under your guns," she whispered to Hulot.

The commandant recoiled a step and looked with a jeering contempt, impossible to render, at the woman whose features and expression gave no sign whatever of relenting. There is one thing remarkable about women: they never reason about their blameworthy actions, — feeling carries them off their feet; even in their dissimulation there is an element of sincerity; and in women alone crime may exist without baseness; for it often happens that they do not know how it came about that they committed it.

"I am going to Saint-James, to a ball the Chouans give to-morrow night, and —"

"But," said Corentin, interrupting her, "that is fifteen miles distant; had I not better accompany you?"

"You think a great deal too much of something I never think of at all," she replied, "and that is yourself."

Marie's contempt for Corentin was extremely pleasing to Hulot, who made his well-known grimace as she turned away in the direction of her own house. Corentin followed her with his eyes, letting his face express a consciousness of the fatal power he knew he could exercise over the charming creature, by working upon the passions which sooner or later, he believed, would give her to him.

As soon as Mademoiselle de Verneuil reached home she began to deliberate on her ball-dress. Francine, accustomed to obey without understanding her mistress's motives, opened the trunks, and suggested a Greek costume. The Republican fashions of those days were all Greek in style. Marie chose one which could be put in a box that was easy to carry.

"Francine, my dear, I am going on an excursion into the country; do you want to go with me, or will you stay behind?"

"Stay behind!" exclaimed Francine; "then who would dress you?"

"Where have you put that glove I gave you this morning?"

"Here it is."

"Sew this green ribbon to it, and, above all, take plenty of money." Then noticing that Francine was taking out a number of the new Republican coins, she cried out, "Not those; they would get us murdered. Send Jérémie to Corentin — no, stay, the wretch would

ollow me — send to the commandant; ask him from me for some six-franc crowns.”

With the feminine sagacity which takes in the smallest detail, she thought of everything. While Francine was completing the arrangements for this extraordinary rip, Marie practised the art of imitating an owl, and so far succeeded in rivalling Marche-à-Terre that the illusion was a good one. At midnight she left Fougères by the gate of Saint-Léonard, took the little path to Nid-aux-Crocs, and started, followed by Francine, to cross the Val de Gibarry with a firm step, under the impulse of that strong will which gives to the body and its bearing such an expression of force. To leave a ball-room with sufficient care to avoid a cold is an important affair to the health of a woman; but let her have a passion in her heart, and her body becomes adamant. Such an enterprise as Marie had now undertaken would have floated in a bold man's mind for a long time; but Mademoiselle de Verneuil had no sooner thought of it than its dangers became to her attractions.

“You are starting without asking God to bless you,” said Francine, turning to look at the tower of Saint-Léonard.

The pious Breton stopped, clasped her hands, and said an “Ave” to Saint Anne of Auray, imploring her to bless their expedition; during which time her mistress waited pensively, looking first at the artless attitude of her maid who was praying fervently, and then at the effects of the vaporous moonlight as it glided among the traceries of the church building, giving to the granite all the delicacy of filagree. The pair soon reached the hut of Galope-Chopine. Light as their steps were they roused one of those huge watch-dogs

on whose fidelity the Bretons rely, putting no fastening to their doors but a simple latch. The dog ran to the strangers, and his bark became so threatening that they were forced to retreat a few steps and call for help. But no one came. Mademoiselle de Verneuil then gave the owl's cry, and instantly the rusty hinges of the door made a creaking sound, and Galope-Chopine, who had risen hastily, put out his head.

"I wish to go to Saint-James," said Marie, showing the Gars' glove. "Monsieur le Comte de Bauvan told me that you would take me there and protect me on the way. Therefore be good enough to get us two riding donkeys, and make yourself ready to go with us. Time is precious, for if we do not get to Saint-James before to-morrow night I can neither see the ball nor the Gars."

Galope-Chopine, completely bewildered, took the glove and turned it over and over, after lighting a pitch candle about a finger thick and the color of gingerbread. This article of consumption, imported into Brittany from the North, was only one more proof to the eyes in this strange country of the utter ignorance of all commercial principles, even the commonest. After seeing the green ribbon, staring at Mademoiselle de Verneuil, scratching his ear, and drinking a beaker of cider (having first offered a glass to the beautiful lady), Galope-Chopine left her seated before the table and went to fetch the required donkeys.

The violet gleam cast by the pitch candle was not powerful enough to counteract the fitful moonlight, which touched the dark floor and furniture of the smoke-blackened cottage with luminous points. The little boy had lifted his pretty head inquisitively, and above it two cows were poking their rosy muzzles and

brilliant eyes through the holes in the stable wall. The big dog, whose countenance was by no means the least intelligent of the family, seemed to be examining the strangers with as much curiosity as the little boy. A painter would have stopped to admire the night effects of this scene, but Marie, not wishing to enter into conversation with Barbette, who sat up in bed and began to show signs of amazement at recognizing her, left the hovel to escape its fetid air and the questions of its mistress. She ran quickly up the stone staircase behind the cottage, admiring the vast details of the landscape, the aspect of which underwent as many changes as spectators made steps either upward to the summits or downward to the valleys. The moonlight was now enveloping like a luminous mist the valley of Couësnon. Certainly a woman whose heart was burdened with a despised love would be sensitive to the melancholy which that soft brilliancy inspires in the soul, by the weird appearances it gives to objects and the colors with which it tints the stream.

The silence was presently broken by the braying of a donkey. Marie went quickly back to the hut, and the party started. Galope-Chopine, armed with a double-barrelled gun; wore a long goatskin, which gave him something the look of Robinson Crusoe. His blotched face, seamed with wrinkles, was scarcely visible under the broad-brimmed hat which the Breton peasants still retain as a tradition of the olden time; proud to have won, after their servitude, the right to wear the former ornament of seignorial heads. This nocturnal caravan, protected by a guide whose clothing, attitudes, and person had something patriarchal about them, bore no little resemblance to the Flight into Egypt as we see it

represented by the sombre brush of Rembrandt. Galope-Chopine carefully avoided the main-road and guided the two women through the labyrinth of by-ways which intersect Brittany.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil then understood the Chouan warfare. In threading these complicated paths, she could better appreciate the condition of a country which when she saw it from an elevation had seemed to her so charming, but into which it was necessary to penetrate before the dangers and inextricable difficulties of it could be understood. Round each field, and from time immemorial, the peasants have piled mud walls, about six feet high, and prismatic in shape; on the top of which grow chestnuts, oaks and beeches. The walls thus planted are called hedges (Norman hedges) and the long branches of the trees sweeping over the paths arch them. Sunken between these walls (made of a clay soil) the paths are like the covered ways of a fortification, and where the granite rock, which in these regions comes to the surface of the ground, does not make a sort of rugged natural pavement, they become so impracticable that the smallest vehicles can only be drawn over them by two pairs of oxen or Breton horses, which are small but usually vigorous. These by-ways are so swampy that foot-passengers have gradually by long usage made other paths beside them on the hedge-banks which are called "*rotes*;" and these begin and end with each division into fields. In order to cross from one field to another it is necessary to climb the clay banks by means of steps which are often very slippery after a rain.

Travellers have many other obstacles to encounter in these intricate paths. Thus surrounded, each field is

losed by what is called in the West an *échalier*. That is a trunk or stout branch of a tree, one end of which, being pierced, is fitted to an upright post which serves as a pivot on which it turns. One end of the *échalier* projects far enough beyond the pivot to hold a weight, and this singular rustic gate, the post of which rests in a hole made in the bank, is so easy to work that a child can handle it. Sometimes the peasants economize the stone which forms the weight by lengthening the trunk or branch beyond the pivot. This method of enclosure varies with the genius of each proprietor. Sometimes it consists of a single trunk or branch, both ends of which are imbedded in the bank. In other places it looks like a gate, and is made of several slim branches placed at regular distances like the steps of a ladder lying horizontally. The form turns, like the *échalier*, on a pivot. These "hedges" and *échaliers* give the region the appearance of a huge chess-board, each field forming a square, perfectly isolated from the rest, closed like a fortress and protected by ramparts. The gate, which is very easy to defend, is a dangerous spot for assailants. The Breton peasant thinks he improves his fallow land by encouraging the growth of gorse, a shrub so well treated in these regions that it soon attains the height of a man. His delusion, worthy of a population which puts its manure on the highest spot in the courtyard, has covered the soil to a proportion of one fourth with masses of gorse, in the midst of which a thousand men might imbush. Also there is scarcely a field without a number of old apple-trees, the fruit being used for cider, which kill the vegetation wherever their branches cover the ground. Now, if the reader will reflect on the small

extent of open ground within these hedges and large trees whose hungry roots impoverish the soil, he will have an idea of the cultivation and general character of the region through which Mademoiselle de Verneuil was now passing.

It is difficult to say whether the object of these inclosures is to avoid all disputes of possession, or whether the custom is a lazy one of keeping the cattle from straying, without the trouble of watching them; at any rate such formidable barriers are permanent obstacles, which make these regions impenetrable and ordinary warfare impossible. There lies the whole secret of the Chouan war. Mademoiselle de Verneuil saw plainly the necessity the Republic was under to strangle the disaffection by means of the police and by negotiation, rather than by a useless employment of military force. What could be done, in fact, with a people wise enough to despise the possession of towns, and hold to that of an open country already furnished with indestructible fortifications? Surely, nothing except negotiate; especially as the whole active strength of these deluded peasants lay in a single able and enterprising leader. She admired the genius of the minister who, sitting in his study, had been able to grasp the true way of procuring peace. She thought she understood the considerations which act on the minds of men powerful enough to take a bird's-eye view of an empire; men whose actions, criminal in the eyes of the masses, are the outcome of a vast and intelligent thought. There is in these terrible souls some mysterious blending of the force of fate and that of destiny, some prescience which suddenly elevates them above their fellows; the masses seek them for a time in

their own ranks, then they raise their eyes and see these lordly souls above them.

Such reflections as these seemed to Mademoiselle de Verneuil to justify and even to ennoble her thoughts of vengeance ; this travail of her soul and its expectations gave her vigor enough to bear the unusual fatigues of this strange journey. At the end of each property Galope-Chopine made the women dismount from their donkeys and climb the obstructions ; then, mounting again, they made their way through the boggy paths which already felt the approach of winter. The combination of tall trees, sunken paths, and inclosed places, kept the soil in a state of humidity which wrapped the travellers in a mantle of ice. However, after much wearisome fatigue, they managed to reach the woods of Marignay by sunrise. The journey then became less difficult, and led by a broad footway through the forest. The arch formed by the branches, and the great size of the trees protected the travellers from the weather, and the many difficulties of the first half of their way did not recur.

They had hardly gone a couple of miles through the woods before they heard a confused noise of distant voices and the tinkling of a bell, the silvery tones of which did not have the monotonous sound given by the movements of cattle. Galope-Chopine listened with great attention, as he walked along, to this melody ; presently a puff of wind brought several chanted words to his ear, which seemed to affect him powerfully, for he suddenly turned the wearied donkeys into a by-path, which led away from Saint-James, paying no attention to the strong remonstrances of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whose fears were increased by the darkness of the

forest path along which their guide now led them. To right and left were enormous blocks of granite, laid one upon the other, of whimsical shape. Across them huge roots had glided, like monstrous serpents, seeking from afar the juicy nourishment enjoyed by a few beeches. The two sides of the road resembled the subterranean grottos that are famous for stalactites. Immense festoons of stone, where the darkling verdure of ivy and holly allied itself to the green-gray patches of the moss and lichen, hid the precipices and the openings into several caves. When the three travellers had gone a few steps through a very narrow path a most surprising spectacle suddenly unfolded itself to Mademoiselle de Verneuil's eyes, and made her understand the obstinacy of her Chouan guide.

A semi-circular basin of granite blocks formed an amphitheatre, on the rough tiers of which rose tall black pines and yellowing chestnuts, one above the other, like a vast circus, where the wintry sun shed its pale colors rather than poured its light, and autumn had spread her tawny carpet of fallen leaves. About the middle of this hall, which seemed to have had the deluge for its architect, stood three enormous Druid stones, — a vast altar, on which was raised an old church-banner. About a hundred men, kneeling with bared heads, were praying fervently in this natural enclosure, where a priest, assisted by two other ecclesiastics, was saying mass. The poverty of the sacerdotal vestments, the feeble voice of the priest, which echoed like a murmur through the open space, the praying men filled with conviction and united by one and the same sentiment, the bare cross, the wild and barren temple, the dawning day, gave the primitive

character of the earlier times of Christianity to the scene. Mademoiselle de Verneuil was struck with admiration. This mass said in the depths of the woods, his worship driven back by persecution to its sources, the poetry of ancient times revived in the midst of this weird and romantic nature, these armed and unarmed Chouans, cruel and praying, men yet children, all these things resembled nothing that she had ever seen or yet imagined. She remembered admiring in her childhood the pomps of the Roman church so pleasing to the senses; but she knew nothing of God *alone*, his cross on the altar, his altar the earth. In place of the carved foliage which wreaths the columns of a Gothic cathedral, the autumnal trees upheld the sky; instead of a thousand colors thrown through stained glass windows, the sun could barely slide its ruddy rays and dull reflections on altar, priest, and people. The men present were a fact, a reality, and not a system, — it was a prayer, not a religion. But human passions, the momentary repression of which gave harmony to the picture, soon reappeared on this mysterious scene and gave it powerful vitality.

As Mademoiselle de Verneuil reached the spot the reading of the gospel was just over. She recognized the officiating priest, not without fear, the Abbé Judin, and she hastily slipped behind a granite block, drawing Francine after her. She was, however, unable to move Galope-Chopine from the place he had chosen, and from which he intended to share in the benefits of the ceremony; but she noticed the nature of the ground around her, and hoped to be able to evade the danger by getting away, when the service was over, before the priests. Through a large fissure of the rock that hid

her, she saw the Abbé Gudin mounting a block of granite which served him as a pulpit, where he began his sermon with the words, —

“*In nomine Patris et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.*”

All present made the sign of the cross.

“My dear friends,” continued the abbé, “let us pray in the first place for the souls of the dead, — Jean Cohegrue, Nicolas Laferté, Joseph Brouet, François Parquoi, Sulpice Coupiau, all of this parish, and dead of wounds received in the fight on Mont Pèlerine and at the siege of Fougères. *De profundis,*” etc.

The psalm was recited, according to custom, by the congregation and the priests, taking verses alternately with a fervor which augured well for the success of the sermon. When it was over the abbé continued, in a voice which became gradually louder and louder, for the former Jesuit was not unaware that vehemence of delivery was in itself a powerful argument with which to persuade his semi-savage hearers.

“These defenders of our God, Christians, have set you an example of duty,” he said. “Are you not ashamed of what will be said of you in paradise? If it were not for these blessed ones, who have just been received with open arms by all the saints, our Lord might have thought that your parish is inhabited by Mahometans! — Do you know, men, what is said of you in Brittany and in the king’s presence? What! you don’t know? Then I shall tell you. They say: ‘Behold, the Blues have cast down altars, and killed priests, and murdered the king and queen; they mean to make the parish folk of Brittany Blues like themselves, and send them to fight in foreign lands, away from their churches, where they run the risk of dying without confession and going

eternally to hell ; and yet the gars of Marignay, whose churches they have burned, stand still with folded arms ! Oh ! oh ! this Republic of damned souls has sold the property of God and that of the nobles at auction ; it has shared the proceeds with the Blues ; it has decreed, in order to gorge itself with money as it does with blood, that a crown shall be only worth three francs instead of six ; and yet the gars of Marignay have n't seized their weapons and driven the Blues from Brittany ! Ha ! paradise will be closed to them ! they can never save their souls !' That's what they say of you in the king's presence ! It is your own salvation, Christians, which is at stake. Your souls are to be saved by fighting for religion and the king. Saint Anne of Auray herself appeared to me yesterday at half-past two o'clock ; and she said to me these very words which I now repeat to you : 'Are you a priest of Marignay ?' 'Yes, madame, ready to serve you.' 'I am Saint Anne of Auray, aunt of God, after the manner of Brittany. I have come to bid you warn the people of Marignay that they must not hope for salvation if they do not take arms. You are to refuse them absolution for their sins unless they serve God. Bless their guns, and those who gain absolution will never miss the Blues, because their guns are sanctified.' She disappeared, leaving an odor of incense behind her. I marked the spot. It is under the oak of the Patte d'Oie ; just where that beautiful wooden Virgin was placed by the rector of Saint-James ; to whom the crippled mother of Pierre Leroi (otherwise called Marche-à-Terre) came to pray, and was cured of all her pains, because of her son's good deeds. You see her there in the midst of you, and you know that she walks without assistance. It was a miracle—

a miracle intended, like the resurrection of Marie Lambréquin to prove to you that God will never forsake the Breton cause so long as the people fight for his servants and for the king. Therefore, my dear brothers, if you wish to save your souls and show yourselves defenders of God and the king, you will obey all the orders of the man whom God has sent to us, and whom we call THE GARS. Then indeed, you will no longer be Mahometans ; you will rank with all the gars of Brittany under the flag of God. You can take from the pockets of the Blues the money they have stolen from you ; for, if the fields have to go uncultivated while you are making war, God and the king will deliver to you the spoils of your enemies. Shall it be said, Christians, that the gars of Marignay are behind the gars of the Morbihan, the gars of Saint-Georges, of Vitré, of Antrain, who are all faithful to God and the king? Will you let them get all the spoils? Will you stand like heretics, with your arms folded, when other Bretons are saving their souls and saving their king? ‘Forsake all, and follow me,’ says the Gospel. Have we not forsaken our tithes, we priests? And you, I say to you, forsake all for this holy war! You shall be like the Maccabees. All will be forgiven you. You will find the priests and curates in your midst, and you will conquer! Pay attention to these words, Christians,” he said, as he ended ; “for this day only have we the power to bless your guns. Those who do not take advantage of the Saint’s favor will not find her merciful ; she will not forgive them or listen to them as she did in the last war.”

This appeal, enforced by the power of a loud voice and by many gestures, the vehemence of which bathed

the orator in perspiration, produced, apparently, very little effect. The peasants stood motionless, their eyes on the speaker, like statues; but Mademoiselle de Verneuil presently noticed that this universal attitude was the result of a spell cast by the abbé on the crowd. He had, like great actors, held his audience as one man by addressing their passions and self-interests. He had absolved excesses before committal, and broken the only bonds which held these boorish men to the practice of religious and social precepts. He had prostituted his sacred office to political interests; but it must be said that, in these times of revolution, every man made a weapon of whatever he possessed for the benefit of his party, and the pacific cross of Jesus became as much an instrument of war as the peasant's ploughshare.

Seeing no one with whom to advise, Mademoiselle de Verneuil turned to look for Francine, and was not a little astonished to see that she shared in the rapt enthusiasm, and was devoutly saying her chaplet over some beads which Galope-Chopine had probably given her during the sermon.

"Francine," she said, in a low voice, "are you afraid of being a Mahometan?"

"Oh! mademoiselle," replied the girl, "just see Pierre's mother; she is walking!"

Francine's whole attitude showed such deep conviction that Marie understood at once the secret of the nomily, the influence of the clergy over the rural masses, and the tremendous effect of the scene which was now beginning.

The peasants advanced one by one and knelt down, presenting their guns to the preacher, who laid them

upon the altar. Galope-Chopine offered his old duck-shooter. The three priests sang the hymn "Veni, Creator," while the celebrant wrapped the instruments of death in bluish clouds of incense, waving the smoke into shapes that appeared to interlace one another. When the breeze had dispersed the vapor the guns were returned in due order. Each man received his own on his knees from the hands of the priests, who recited a Latin prayer as they returned them. After the men had regained their places, the profound enthusiasm of the congregation, mute until then, broke forth and resounded in a formidable manner.

"*Domine salvum fac regem!*" was the prayer which the preacher intoned in an echoing voice, and was then sung vehemently by the people. The cry had something savage and warlike in it. The two notes of the word *regem*, readily interpreted by the peasants, were taken with such energy that Mademoiselle de Verneuil's thoughts reverted almost tenderly to the exiled Bourbon family. These recollections awakened those of her past life. Her memory revived the fêtes of a court now dispersed, in which she had once a share. The face of the marquis entered her reverie. With the natural mobility of a woman's mind she forgot the scene before her and reverted to her plans of vengeance, which might cost her her life or come to nought under the influence of a look. Seeing a branch of holly the trivial thought crossed her mind that in this decisive moment, when she wished to appear in all her beauty at the ball, she had no decoration for her hair; and she gathered a tuft of the prickly leaves and shining berries with the idea of wearing them.

"Ho! ho! my gun may miss fire on a duck, but on a

blue, never!" cried Galope-Chopine, nodding his head in sign of satisfaction.

Marie examined her guide's face attentively, and found it of the type of those she had just seen. The old Chouan had evidently no more ideas than a child. A naïve joy wrinkled his cheeks and forehead as he looked at his gun; but a pious conviction cast upon that expression of his joy a tinge of fanaticism, which brought into his face for an instant the signs of the ices of civilization.

Presently they reached a village, or rather a collection of huts like that of Galope-Chopine, where the rest of the congregation arrived before Mademoiselle de Verneuil had finished the milk and bread and butter which formed the meal. This irregular company was led by the abbé, who held in his hand a rough cross rapped with a flag, followed by a gars, who was proudly carrying the parish banner. Mademoiselle de Verneuil was compelled to mingle with this detachment, which was in its way, like herself, to Saint-James, and would naturally protect her from all danger as soon as Galope-Chopine informed them that the Gars glove was in her possession, provided always that the abbé did not see her.

Towards sunset the three travellers arrived safely at Saint-James, a little town which owes its name to the English, by whom it was built in the fourteenth century, during their occupation of Brittany. Before entering it Mademoiselle de Verneuil was witness of a strange scene of this strange war, to which, however, she gave little attention; she feared to be recognized by some of her enemies, and this dread hastened her steps. Five or six thousand peasants were camping in a field. Their

clothing was not in any degree warlike ; in fact, this tumultuous assembly resembled that of a great fair. Some attention was needed to even observe that these Bretons were armed, for their goatskins were so made as to hide their guns, and the weapons that were chiefly visible were the scythes with which some of the men had armed themselves while awaiting the distribution of muskets. Some were eating and drinking, others were fighting and quarrelling in loud tones, but the greater part were sleeping on the ground. An officer in a red uniform attracted Mademoiselle de Verneuil's attention, and she supposed him to belong to the English service. At a little distance two other officers seemed to be trying to teach a few Chouans, more intelligent than the rest, to handle two cannon, which apparently formed the whole artillery of the royalist army. Shouts hailed the coming of the gars of Marignay, who were recognized by their banner. Under cover of the tumult which the new-comers and the priests excited in the camp, Mademoiselle de Verneuil was able to make her way past it and into the town without danger. She stopped at a plain-looking inn not far from the building where the ball was to be given. The town was so full of strangers that she could only obtain one miserable room. When she was safely in it Galope-Chopine brought Francine the box which contained the ball dress, and having done so he stood stock-still in an attitude of indescribable irresolution. At any other time Mademoiselle de Verneuil would have been much amused to see what a Breton peasant can be like when he leaves his native parish ; but now she broke the charm by opening her purse and producing four crowns of six francs each, which she gave him.

"Take it," she said, "and if you wish to oblige me, you will go straight back to Fougères without entering the camp or drinking any cider."

The Chouan, amazed at her liberality, looked first at the crowns (which he had taken) and then at Mademoiselle de Verneuil; but she made him a sign with her hand and he disappeared.

"How could you send him away, mademoiselle?" said Francine. "Don't you see how the place is surrounded? we shall never get away! and who will protect you here?"

"You have a protector of your own," said Marie maliciously, giving in an undertone *Marche-à-Terre's* owl cry which she was constantly practising.

Francine colored, and smiled rather sadly at her mistress's gayety.

"But who is yours?" she said.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil plucked out her dagger, and showed it to the frightened girl, who dropped on a chair and clasped her hands.

"What have you come here for, Marie?" she cried in a supplicating voice which asked no answer.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil was busily twisting the branches of holly which she had gathered.

"I don't know whether this holly will be becoming," she said; "a brilliant skin like mine may possibly bear a dark wreath of this kind. What do you think, Francine?"

Several remarks of the same kind as she dressed for the ball showed the absolute self-possession and coolness of this strange woman. Whoever had listened to her then would have found it hard to believe in the gravity of a situation in which she was risking her life.

An India muslin gown, rather short and clinging like damp linen, revealed the delicate outlines of her shape ; over this she wore a red drapery, numerous folds of which, gradually lengthening as they fell by her side, took the graceful curves of a Greek peplum. This voluptuous garment of the pagan priestesses lessened the indecency of the rest of the attire which the fashions of the time suffered women to wear. To soften its immodesty still further, Marie threw a gauze scarf over her shoulders, left bare and far too low by the red drapery. She wound the long braids of her hair into the flat irregular cone above the nape of the neck which gives such grace to certain antique statues by an artistic elongation of the head, while a few stray locks escaping from her forehead fell in shining curls beside her cheeks. With a form and head thus dressed, she presented a perfect likeness of the noble masterpieces of Greek sculpture. She smiled as she looked with approval at the arrangement of her hair, which brought out the beauties of her face, while the scarlet berries of the holly wreath which she laid upon it repeated charmingly the color of the peplum. As she twisted and turned a few leaves, to give capricious diversity to their arrangement, she examined her whole costume in a mirror to judge of its general effect.

“I am horrible to-night,” she said, as though she were surrounded by flatterers. “I look like a statue of Liberty.”

She placed the dagger carefully in her bosom leaving the rubies in the hilt exposed, their ruddy reflections attracting the eye to the hidden beauties of her shape. Francine could not bring herself to leave her mistress. When Marie was ready she made various pretexts to

follow her. She must help her to take off her mantle, and the overshoes which the mud and muck in the streets compelled her to wear (though the roads had been sanded for this occasion); also the gauze veil which Mademoiselle de Verneuil had thrown over her head to conceal her features from the Chouans who were collecting in the streets to watch the company. The crowd was in fact so great that they were forced to make their way through two hedges of Chouans. Francine no longer strove to detain her mistress, and after giving a few last touches to a costume the greatest charm of which was its exquisite freshness, she stationed herself in the courtyard that she might not abandon this beloved mistress to her fate without being able to fly to her succor; for the poor girl foresaw only evil in these events.

A strange scene was taking place in Montauran's chamber as Marie was on her way to the ball. The young marquis, who had just finished dressing, was putting on the broad red ribbon which distinguished him as first in rank of the assembly, when the Abbé Judin entered the room with an anxious air.

"Monsieur le marquis, come quickly," he said. "You alone can quell a tumult which has broken out, I don't know why, among the leaders. They talk of abandoning the king's cause. I think that devil of a Rifoël is at the bottom of it. Such quarrels are always caused by some mere nonsense. Madame du Gua reproached him, so I hear, for coming to the ball ill-dressed."

"That woman must be crazy," cried the marquis, "to try to —"

"Rifoël retorted," continued the abbé, interrupting

his chief, "that if you had given him the money promised him in the king's name —"

"Enough, enough; I understand it all now. This scene has all been arranged, and you are put forward as ambassador —"

"I, monsieur le marquis!" said the abbé, again interrupting him. "I am supporting you vigorously, and you will, I hope, do me the justice to believe that the restoration of our altars in France and that of the king upon the throne of his fathers are far more powerful incentives to my humble labors than the bishopric of Rennes which you —"

The abbé dared say no more, for the marquis smiled bitterly at his last words. However, the young chief instantly repressed all expression of feeling, his brow grew stern, and he followed the Abbé Gudin into a hall where the worst of the clamor was echoing.

"I recognize no authority here," Rifoël was saying, casting angry looks at all about him and laying his hand on the hilt of his sabre.

"Do you recognize that of common-sense?" asked the marquis, coldly.

The young Chevalier de Vissard, better known under his patronymic of Rifoël, was silent before the general of the Catholic armies.

"What is all this about, gentlemen?" asked the marquis, examining the faces round him.

"This, monsieur le marquis," said a famous smuggler, with the awkwardness of a man of the people who long remains under the yoke of respect to a great lord, though he admits no barriers after he has once jumped them, and regards the aristocrat as an equal only, "*this*," he said, "and you have come in the nick of

me to hear it. I am no speaker of gilded phrases, and I will say things plainly. I commanded five hundred men during the late war. Since we have taken up arms again I have raised a thousand heads as hard as mine for the service of the king. It is now seven years that I have risked my life in the good cause; I don't blame you, but I say that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Now, to begin with, I demand that I be called Monsieur

Cottureau. I also demand that the rank of colonel shall be granted me, or I send in my adhesion to the first Consul! Let me tell you, monsieur le marquis, my men and I have a devilishly importunate creditor who must be satisfied — he's here!" he added, striking his stomach.

"Have the musicians come?" said the marquis, in a contemptuous tone, turning to Madame du Gua.

But the smuggler had dealt boldly with an important officer, and the calculating, ambitious minds of those present had been too long in suspense as to what they might hope for from the king to allow the scorn of their new leader to put an end to the scene. Rifoël timely blocked the way before Montauran, and seized his hand to oblige him to remain.

"Take care, monsieur le marquis," he said; "you are treating far too lightly men who have a right to the attention of him whom you are here to represent. We know that his Majesty has sent you with full powers to regulate our services, and we say that they ought to be recognized and rewarded, for we risk our heads upon the scaffold daily. I know, so far as I am concerned, the rank of brigadier-general —"

You mean colonel."

No, monsieur le marquis; Charette made me a

colonel. The rank I mention cannot be denied me. I am not arguing for myself, I speak for my brave brothers-in-arms, whose services ought to be recorded. Your signature and your promise will suffice them for the present; though," he added, in a low voice, "I must say they are satisfied with very little. But," he continued, raising his voice, "when the sun rises on the château of Versailles to glorify the return of the monarchy after the faithful have conquered France, *in France*, for the king, will they obtain favors for their families, pensions for widows, and the restitution of their confiscated property? I doubt it. But, monsieur le marquis, we must have certified proof of our services when that time comes. I will never distrust the king, but I do distrust those cormorants of ministers and courtiers, who tingle his ears with talk about the public welfare, the honor of France, the interests of the crown, and other crochets. They will sneer at a loyal Vendean or a brave Chouan, because he is old and the sword he drew for the good cause dangles on his withered legs, palsied with exposure. Can you say that we are wrong in feeling thus?"

"You talk well, Monsieur du Vissard, but you are over hasty," replied the marquis.

"Listen, marquis, said the Comte de Bauvan, in a whisper. "Rifoël has really, on my word, told the truth. You are sure, yourself, to have the ear of the king, while the rest of us only see him at a distance and from time to time. I will own to you that if you do not give me your word as a gentleman that I shall, in due course of time, obtain the place of Master of Woods and Waters in France, the devil take me if I will risk my neck any longer. To conquer Normandy

for the king is not an easy matter, and I demand the Order for it. But," he added, coloring, "there's time enough to think of that. God forbid that I should imitate these poor mercenaries and harass you. Speak to the king for me, and that's enough."

Each of the chiefs found means to let the marquis know, in a more or less ingenious manner, the exaggerated price they set upon their services. One modestly demanded the governorship of Brittany; another a barony; this one a promotion; that one a command; and all wanted pensions.

"Well, baron," said the marquis to Monsieur du Guénic, "don't you want anything?"

"These gentlemen have left me nothing but the crown of France, marquis, but I might manage to put up with that —"

"Gentlemen!" cried the Abbé Gudín, in a loud voice, "remember that if you are too eager you will spoil everything in the day of victory. The king will then be compelled to make concessions to the revolutionists."

"To those Jacobins!" shouted the smuggler. "Ha! if the king would let me have my way, I'd answer for my thousand men; we'd soon wring their necks and be rid of them."

"Monsieur *de* Cottereau," said the marquis, "I see some of our invited guests arriving. We must all do our best by attention and courtesy to make them share our sacred enterprise; you will agree, I am sure, that this is not the moment to bring forward your demands, however just they may be."

So saying, the marquis went towards the door, as if to meet certain of the country nobles who were entering the room, but the bold smuggler barred his way in a respectful manner.

“ No, no, monsieur le marquis, excuse me,” he said : “ the Jacobins taught me too well in 1793 that it is not he that sows and reaps who eats the bread. Sign this bit of paper for me, and to-morrow I’ll bring you fifteen hundred gars. If not, I’ll treat with the First Consul.”

Looking haughtily about him, the marquis saw plainly that the boldness of the old partisan and his resolute air were not displeasing to any of the spectators of this debate. One man alone, sitting by himself in a corner of the room, appeared to take no part in the scene, and to be chiefly occupied in filling his pipe. The contemptuous air with which he glanced at the speakers, his modest demeanor, and a look of sympathy which the marquis encountered in his eyes, made the young leader observe the man, whom he then recognized as Major Brigaut, and he went suddenly up to him.

“ And you, what do you want ? ” he said.

“ Oh, monsieur le marquis, if the king comes back that’s all I want.”

“ But for yourself ? ”

“ For myself ? are you joking ? ”

The marquis pressed the horny hand of the Breton, and said to Madame du Gua, who was near them : “ Madame, I may perish in this enterprise before I have time to make a faithful report to the king on the Catholic armies of Brittany. I charge you, in case you live to see the Restoration, not to forget this honorable man nor the Baron du Guénic. There is more devotion in them than in all those other men put together.”

He pointed to the chiefs, who were waiting with some impatience till the marquis should reply to their demands. They were all holding papers in their hands, on which, no doubt, their services were recorded over

the signatures of the various generals of the former war; and all were murmuring. The Abbé Gudin, the Comte de Bauvan, and the Baron du Guénic were consulting how best to help the marquis in rejecting these extravagant demands, for they felt the position of the young leader to be extremely delicate.

Suddenly the marquis ran his blue eyes, gleaming with satire, over the whole assembly, and said in a clear voice: "Gentlemen, I do not know whether the powers which the king has graciously assigned to me are such that I am able to satisfy your demands. He doubtless did not foresee such zeal, such devotion, on your part. You shall judge yourselves of the duties put upon me, — duties which I shall know how to accomplish."

So saying, he left the room and returned immediately holding in his hand an open letter bearing the royal seal and signature.

"These are the letters-patent in virtue of which you are to obey me," he said. "They authorize me to govern the provinces of Brittany, Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, in the king's name, and to recognize the services of such officers as may distinguish themselves in his armies."

A movement of satisfaction ran through the assembly. The Chouans approached the marquis and made a respectful circle round him. All eyes fastened on the king's signature. The young chief, who was standing near the chimney, suddenly threw the letters into the fire, and they were burned in a second.

"I do not choose to command any," cried the young man, "but those who see a king in the king, and not a prey to prey upon. You are free, gentlemen, to leave me."

Madame du Gua, the Abbé Gudin, Major Brigaut, the Chevalier du Vissard, the Baron du Guénic, and the Comte de Bauvan raised the cry of "Vive le roi!" For a moment the other leaders hesitated; then, carried away by the noble action of the marquis, they begged him to forget what had passed, assuring him that, letters-patent or not, he must always be their leader.

"Come and dance," cried the Comte de Bauvan, "and happen what will! After all," he added, gayly, "it is better, my friends, to pray to God than the saints. Let us fight first, and see what comes of it."

"Ha! that's good advice," said Brigaut. "I have never yet known a day's pay drawn in the morning."

The assembly dispersed about the rooms, where the guests were now arriving. The marquis tried in vain to shake off the gloom which darkened his face. The chiefs perceived the unfavorable impression made upon a young man whose devotion was still surrounded by all the beautiful illusions of youth, and they were ashamed of their action.

However, a joyous gayety soon enlivened the opening of the ball, at which were present the most important personages of the royalist party, who, unable to judge rightly, in the depths of a rebellious province, of the actual events of the Revolution, mistook their hopes for realities. The bold operations already begun by Montauran, his name, his fortune, his capacity, raised their courage and caused that political intoxication, the most dangerous of all excitements, which does not cool till torrents of blood have been uselessly shed. In the minds of all present the Revolution was nothing more than a passing trouble to the kingdom of France, where, to their belated eyes, nothing was changed. The coun-

try belonged as it ever did to the house of Bourbon. The royalists were the lords of the soil as completely as they were four years earlier, when Hoche obtained less a peace than an armistice. The nobles made light of the revolutionists; for them Bonaparte was another, but more fortunate, Marceau. So gayety reigned. The women had come to dance. A few only of the chiefs, who had fought the Blues, knew the gravity of the situation; but they were well aware that if they talked of the First Consul and his power to their benighted companions, they could not make themselves understood. These men stood apart and looked at the women with indifference. Madame du Gua, who seemed to do the honors of the ball, endeavored to quiet the impatience of the dancers by dispensing flatteries to each in turn. The musicians were tuning their instruments and the dancing was about to begin, when Madame du Gua noticed the gloom on de Montauran's face and went hurriedly up to him.

"I hope it is not that vulgar scene you have just had with those clodhoppers which depresses you?" she said.

She got no answer; the marquis, absorbed in thought, was listening in fancy to the prophetic reasons which Marie had given him in the midst of the same chiefs at La Vivetière, urging him to abandon the struggle of kings against peoples. But the young man's soul was too proud, too lofty, too full perhaps of conviction, to abandon an enterprise he had once begun, and he decided at this moment, to continue it boldly in the face of all obstacles. He raised his head haughtily, and for the first time noticed that Madame du Gua was speaking to him.

"Your mind is no doubt at Fougères," she remarked bitterly, seeing how useless her efforts to attract his attention had been. "Ah, monsieur, I would give my life to put *her* within your power, and see you happy with her."

"Then why have you done all you could to kill her?"

"Because I wish her dead or in your arms. Yes, I may have loved the Marquis de Montauran when I thought him a hero, but now I feel only a pitying friendship for him; I see him shorn of all his glory by a fickle love for a worthless woman."

"As for love," said the marquis, in a sarcastic tone, "you judge me wrong. If I loved that girl, madame, I might desire her less; if it were not for you, perhaps I should not think of her at all."

"Here she is!" exclaimed Madame du Gua, abruptly.

The haste with which the marquis looked round went to the heart of the woman; but the clear light of the wax candles enabled her to see every change on the face of the man she loved so violently, and when he turned back his face, smiling at her woman's trick, she fancied there was still some hope of recovering him.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the Comte de Bauvan.

"At a soap-bubble which has burst," interposed Madame du Gua, gayly. "The marquis, if we are now to believe him, is astonished that his heart ever beat the faster for that girl who presumes to call herself Mademoiselle de Verneuil. You know who I mean."

"That girl!" echoed the count. "Madame, the author of a wrong is bound to repair it. I give you my word of honor that she is really the daughter of the Duc de Verneuil."

*“‘Believe the one now made,’ he replied to the
astonished young leader.”*



C. Bourgain

gravé par Robert Bie

G. Bourgain &

Paris de l'Opéra

“Monsieur le comte,” said the marquis, in a changed voice, “which of your statements am I to believe, — that of La Vivetière, or that now made?”

The loud voice of a servant at the door announced Mademoiselle de Verneuil. The count sprang forward instantly, offered his hand to the beautiful woman with every mark of profound respect, and led her through the inquisitive crowd to the marquis and Madame du Gua. “Believe the one now made,” he replied to the astonished young leader.

Madame du Gua turned pale at the unwelcome sight of the girl, who stood for a moment, glancing proudly over the assembled company, among whom she sought to find the guests at La Vivetière. She awaited the forced salutation of her rival, and, without even looking at the marquis, she allowed the count to lead her to the place of honor beside Madame du Gua, whose bow she returned with an air that was slightly protecting. But the latter, with a woman’s instinct, took no offense; on the contrary, she immediately assumed a smiling, friendly manner. The extraordinary dress and beauty of Mademoiselle de Verneuil caused a murmur throughout the ballroom. When the marquis and Madame du Gua looked towards the late guests at La Vivetière they saw them in an attitude of respectful admiration which was not assumed; each seemed desirous of recovering favor with the misjudged young woman. The enemies were in presence of each other.

“This is really magic, mademoiselle,” said Madame du Gua; “there is no one like you for surprises. Have you come all alone?”

“All alone,” replied Mademoiselle de Verneuil. “So you have only one to kill to-night, madame.”

"Be merciful," said Madame du Gua. "I cannot express to you the pleasure I have in seeing you again. I have truly been overwhelmed by the remembrance of the wrongs I have done you, and am most anxious for an occasion to repair them."

"As for those wrongs, madame, I readily pardon those you did to me, but my heart bleeds for the Blues whom you murdered. However, I excuse all, in return for the service you have done me."

Madame du Gua lost countenance as she felt her hand pressed by her beautiful rival with insulting courtesy. The marquis had hitherto stood motionless, but he now seized the arm of the count.

"You have shamefully misled me," he said; "you have compromised my honor. I am not a G ron te of comedy, and I shall have your life or you will have mine."

"Marquis," said the count, haughtily, "I am ready to give you all the explanations you desire."

They passed into the next room. The witnesses of this scene, even those least initiated into the secret, began to understand its nature, so that when the musicians gave the signal for the dancing to begin no one moved.

"Mademoiselle, what service have I rendered you that deserves a return?" said Madame du Gua, biting her lips in a sort of rage.

"Did you not enlighten me as to the true character of the Marquis de Montauran, madame? With what utter indifference that man allowed me to go to my death! I give him up to you willingly."

"Then why are you here?" asked Madame du Gua, eagerly.

“To recover the respect and consideration you took from me at La Vivetière, madame. As for all the rest, make yourself easy. Even if the marquis returned to me, you know very well that a return is never love.”

Madame du Gua took Mademoiselle de Verneuil's hand with that affectionate touch and motion which women practise to each other, especially in the presence of men.

“Well, my poor dear child,” she said, “I am glad to find you so reasonable. If the service I did you was rather harsh,” she added, pressing the hand she held, and feeling a desire to rend it as her fingers felt its softness and delicacy, “it shall at least be thorough. Listen to me, I know the character of the Gars; he meant to deceive you; he neither can nor will marry any woman except—”

“Ah!”

“Yes, mademoiselle, he has accepted his dangerous mission to win the hand of Mademoiselle d'Uxelles, a marriage to which his Majesty has promised his countenance.”

“Ah! ah!”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil added not a word to that scornful ejaculation. The young and handsome Chevalier du Vissard, eager to be forgiven for the joke which had led to the insults at La Vivetière, now came up to her and respectfully invited her to dance. She placed her hand in his, and they took their places in a quadrille opposite to Madame du Gua. The gowns of the royalist women, which recalled the fashions of the exiled court, and their crêped and powdered hair seemed absurd as soon as they were contrasted with the attire which republican fashions authorized Mademoiselle de

Verneuil to wear. This attire, which was elegant, rich, and yet severe, was loudly condemned but inwardly envied by all the women present. The men could not restrain their admiration for the beauty of her natural hair and the adjustment of a dress the charm of which was in the proportions of the form which it revealed.

At that moment the marquis and the count re-entered the ballroom behind Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who did not turn her head. If a mirror had not been there to inform her of Montauran's presence, she would have known it from Madame du Gua's face, which scarcely concealed, under an apparently indifferent air, the impatience with which she awaited the conflict which must, sooner or later, take place between the lovers. Though the marquis talked with the count and other persons, he heard the remarks of all the dancers who from time to time in the mazes of the quadrille took the place of Mademoiselle de Verneuil and her partner.

"Positively, madame, she came alone," said one.

"She must be a bold woman," replied the lady.

"If I were dressed like that I should feel myself naked," said another woman.

"Oh, the gown is not decent, certainly," replied her partner; "but it is so becoming, and she is so handsome."

"I am ashamed to look at such perfect dancing, for her sake; is n't it exactly that of an opera girl?" said the envious woman.

"Do you suppose she has come here to intrigue for the First Consul?" said another.

"A joke if she has," replied the partner.

"Well, she can't offer innocence as a dowry," said the lady, laughing.

The Gars turned abruptly to see the lady who uttered this sarcasm, and Madame du Gua looked at him as if to say, "You see what people think of her."

"Madame," said the count, laughing, "so far, it is only women who have taken her innocence away from her."

The marquis privately forgave the count. When he ventured to look at his mistress, whose beauty was, like that of most women, brought into relief by the light of the wax candles, she turned her back upon him as she resumed her place, and went on talking to her partner in a way to let the marquis hear the sweetest and most caressing tones of her voice.

"The First Consul sends dangerous ambassadors," her partner was saying.

"Monsieur," she replied, "you all said that at La Vivetière."

"You have the memory of a king," replied he, disconcerted at his own awkwardness.

"To forgive injuries one must needs remember them," she said quickly, relieving his embarrassment with a smile.

"Are we all included in that amnesty?" said the marquis, approaching her.

But she darted away in the dance, with the gayety of a child, leaving him without an answer. He watched her coldly and sadly; she saw it, and bent her head with one of those coquettish motions which the graceful lines of her throat enabled her to make, omitting no movement or attitude which could prove to him the perfection of her figure. She attracted him like hope, and eluded him like a memory. To see her thus was to desire to possess her at any cost. She knew that,

and the sense it gave her of her own beauty shed upon her whole person an inexpressible charm. The marquis felt the storm of love, of rage, of madness, rising in his heart; he wrung the count's hand violently and left the room.

"Is he gone?" said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, returning to her place.

The count gave her a glance and passed into the next room, from which he presently returned accompanied by the Gars.

"He is mine!" she thought, observing his face in the mirror.

She received the young leader with a displeased air and said nothing, but she smiled as she turned away from him; he was so superior to all about him that she was proud of being able to rule him; and obeying an instinct which sways all women more or less, she resolved to let him know the value of a few gracious words by making him pay dear for them. As soon as the quadrille was over, all the gentlemen who had been at La Vivetière surrounded Mademoiselle de Verneuil, wishing by their flattering attentions to obtain her pardon for the mistake they had made; but he whom she longed to see at her feet did not approach the circle over which she now reigned a queen.

"He thinks I still love him," she thought, "and does not wish to be confounded with mere flatterers."

She refused to dance again. Then, as if the ball were given for her, she walked about on the arm of the Comte de Bauvan, to whom she was pleased to show some familiarity. The affair at La Vivetière was by this time known to all present, thanks to Madame du Gua, and the lovers were the object of general attention.

The marquis dared not again address his mistress ; a sense of the wrong he had done her and the violence of his returning passion made her seem to him actually terrible. On her side Marie watched his apparently calm face while she seemed to be observing the ball.

"It is fearfully hot here," she said to the count. "Take me to the other side where I can breathe ; I am stifling here."

And she motioned towards a small room where a few card-players were assembled. The marquis followed her. He ventured to hope she had left the crowd to receive him, and this supposed favor roused his passion to extreme violence ; for his love had only increased through the resistance he had made to it during the last few days. Mademoiselle de Verneuil still tormented him ; her eyes, so soft and velvety for the count, were hard and stern when, as if by accident, they met his. Montauran at last made a painful effort and said, in a muffled voice, "Will you never forgive me?"

"Love forgives nothing, or it forgives all," she said, coldly. "But," she added, noticing his joyful look, "it must be love."

She took the count's arm once more and moved forward into a small boudoir which adjoined the cardroom. The marquis followed her.

"Will you not hear me?" he said.

"One would really think, monsieur," she replied, "that I had come here to meet you, and not to vindicate my own self-respect. If you do not cease this odious pursuit I shall leave the ballroom.

"Ah!" he cried, recollecting one of the crazy actions of the last Duc de Lorraine, "let me speak to you only so long as I can hold this live coal in my hand."

He stooped to the hearth and picking up a brand held it tightly. Mademoiselle de Verneuil flushed, took her arm from that of the count, and looked at the marquis in amazement. The count softly withdrew, leaving them alone together. So crazy an action shook Marie's heart, for there is nothing so persuasive in love as courageous folly.

"You only prove to me," she said, trying to make him throw away the brand, "that you are willing to make me suffer cruelly. You are extreme in everything. On the word of a fool and the slander of a woman you suspected that one who had just saved your life was capable of betraying you."

"Yes," he said, smiling, "I have been very cruel to you; but nevertheless, forget it; I shall never forget it. Hear me. I have been shamefully deceived; but so many circumstances on that fatal day told against you —"

"And those circumstances were stronger than your love?"

He hesitated; she made a motion of contempt, and rose.

"Oh, Marie. I shall never cease to believe in you now."

"Then throw that fire away. You are mad. Open your hand; I insist upon it."

He took delight in still resisting the soft efforts of her fingers, but she succeeded in opening the hand she would fain have kissed.

"What good did that do you?" she said, as she tore her handkerchief and laid it on the burn, which the marquis covered with his glove.

Madame du Gua had stolen softly into the cardroom,

watching the lovers with furtive eyes, but escaping theirs adroitly ; it was, however, impossible for her to understand their conversation from their actions.

"If all that they said of me was true you must admit that I am avenged at this moment," said Marie, with a look of malignity which startled the marquis.

"What feeling brought you here?" he asked.

"Do you suppose, my dear friend, that you can despise a woman like me with impunity? I came here for your sake and my own," she continued, after a pause, laying her hand on the hilt of rubies in her bosom and showing him the blade of her dagger.

"What does all that mean?" thought Madame du Lau.

"But," she continued, "you still love me ; at any rate, you desire me, and the folly you have just committed," he added, taking his hand, "proves it to me. I will gain be that I desired to be ; and I return to Fougères happy. Love absolves everything. You love me ; I have regained the respect of the man who represents to me the whole world, and I can die."

"Then you still love me?" said the marquis.

"Have I said so?" she replied with a scornful look, delighting in the torture she was making him endure. I have run many risks to come here. I have saved Monsieur de Bauvan's life, and he, more grateful than others, offers me in return his fortune and his name. You have never even thought of doing that."

The marquis, bewildered by these words, stifled the worst anger he had ever felt, supposing that the count had played him false. He made no answer.

"Ah ! you reflect," she said, bitterly.

"Mademoiselle," replied the young man, "your doubts justify mine."

"Let us leave this room," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, catching sight of a corner of Madame du Gua's gown, and rising. But the wish to reduce her rival to despair was too strong, and she made no further motion to go.

"Do you mean to drive me to hell?" cried the marquis, seizing her hand and pressing it violently.

"Did you not drive me to hell five days ago? are you not leaving me at this very moment uncertain whether your love is sincere or not?"

"But how do I know whether your revenge may not lead you to obtain my life to tarnish it, instead of killing me."

"Ah! you do not love me! you think of yourself and not of me!" she said angrily, shedding a few tears.

The coquettish creature well knew the power of her eyes when moistened by tears.

"Well, then," he cried, beside himself, "take my life, but dry those tears."

"Oh, my love! my love!" she exclaimed in a stifled voice; "those are the words, the accents, the looks I have longed for, to allow me to prefer your happiness to mine. But," she added, "I ask one more proof of your love, which you say is so great. I wish to stay here only so long as may be needed to show the company that you are mine. I will not even drink a glass of water in the house of a woman who has twice tried to kill me, who is now, perhaps, plotting mischief against us," and she showed the marquis the floating corner of Madame du Gua's drapery. Then she dried her eyes and put her lips to the ear of the young man, who quivered as he felt the soft caress of her warm breath. "See that everything is prepared for my departure,"

she said ; "you shall take me yourself to Fougères and there only will I tell you if I love you. For the second time I trust you. Will you trust me a second time?"

"Ah, Marie, you have brought me to a point where I know not what I do. I am intoxicated by your words, your looks, by you — by you, and I am ready to obey you."

"Well, then, make me for an instant very happy. Let me enjoy the only triumph I desire. I want to breathe freely, to drink of the life I have dreamed, to feed my illusions before they are gone forever. Come — come into the ballroom and dance with me."

They re-entered the room together, and though Mademoiselle de Verneuil was as completely satisfied in heart and vanity as any woman ever could be, the unfathomable gentleness of her eyes, the demure smile on her lips, the rapidity of the motions of a gay dance, kept the secret of her thoughts as the sea swallows those of the criminal who casts a weighted body into its depths. But a murmur of admiration ran through the company as, circling in each other's arms, eye to eye, voluptuously interlaced, with heavy heads, and dimmed sight, they waltzed with a sort of frenzy, dreaming of the pleasures they hoped to find in a future union.

A few moments later Mademoiselle de Verneuil and the marquis were in the latter's travelling-carriage drawn by four horses. Surprised to see these enemies hand in hand, and evidently understanding each other, Francine kept silence, not daring to ask her mistress whether her conduct was that of treachery or love. Thanks to the darkness, the marquis did not observe Mademoiselle de Verneuil's agitation as they neared Fougères. The first flush of dawn showed the towers of Saint-Léonard in the distance.

At that moment Marie was saying to herself: "I am going to my death."

As they ascended the first hill the lovers had the same thought; they left the carriage and mounted the rise on foot, in memory of their first meeting. When Marie took the young man's arm she thanked him by a smile for respecting her silence; then, as they reached the summit of the plateau and looked at Fougères, she threw off her reverie.

"Don't come any farther," she said; "my authority cannot save you from the Blues to-day."

Montauran showed some surprise. She smiled sadly and pointed to a block of a granite, as if to tell him to sit down, while she herself stood before him in a melancholy attitude. The rending emotions of her soul no longer permitted her to play a part. At that moment she would have knelt on red-hot coals without feeling them any more than the marquis had felt the fire-brand he had taken in his hand to prove the strength of his passion. It was not until she had contemplated her lover with a look of the deepest anguish that she said to him, at last: —

"All that you have suspected of me is true."

The marquis started.

"Ah! I pray you," she said, clasping her hands, "listen to me without interruption. I am indeed the daughter of the Duc de Verneuil, — but his natural daughter. My mother, a Demoiselle de Casteran, who became a nun to escape the reproaches of her family, expiated her fault by fifteen years of sorrow, and died at Sééz, where she was abbess. On her death-bed she implored, for the first time and only for me, the help of the man who had betrayed her, for she knew she was

leaving me without friends, without fortune, without a future. The duke accepted the charge, and took me from the roof of Francine's mother, who had hitherto taken care of me; perhaps he liked me because I was beautiful; possibly I reminded him of his youth. He was one of those great lords of the old régime, who took pride in showing how they could get their crimes forgiven by committing them with grace. I will say no more, he was my father. But let me explain to you now my life in Paris injured my soul. The society of the Duc de Verneuil, to which he introduced me, was bitten by that scoffing philosophy about which all France was then enthusiastic because it was wittily professed. The brilliant conversations which charmed my ear were marked by subtlety of perception and by witty contempt for all that was true and spiritual. Men laughed at sentiments, and pictured them all the better because they did not feel them; their satirical epigrams were as fascinating as the light-hearted humor with which they could put a whole adventure into a word; and yet they had sometimes too much wit, and wearied women by making love an art, and not a matter of feeling. I could not resist the tide. And yet my soul was too ardent—forgive this pride—not to feel that their minds had withered their hearts; and the life I led resulted in a perpetual struggle between my natural feelings and beliefs and the vicious habits of mind which I there contracted. Several superior men took pleasure in developing in me that liberty of thought and contempt for public opinion which do tear from a woman her modesty of soul, robbed of which she loses her charm. Alas! my subsequent misfortunes have failed to lessen the faults I learned through opulence.

My father," she continued, with a sigh, "the Duc de Verneuil, died, after duly recognizing me as his daughter and making a provision for me by his will, which considerably reduced the fortune of my brother, his legitimate son. I found myself one day without a home and without a protector. My brother contested the will which made me rich. Three years of my late life had developed my vanity. By satisfying all my fancies my father had created in my nature a need of luxury, and given me habits of self-indulgence of which my own mind, young and artless as it then was, could not perceive either the danger or the tyranny. A friend of my father, the Maréchal Duc de Lenoncourt, then seventy years old, offered to become my guardian, and I found myself, soon after the termination of the odious suit, in a brilliant home, where I enjoyed all the advantages of which my brother's cruelty had deprived me. Every evening the old maréchal came to sit with me and comfort me with kind and consoling words. His white hair and the many proofs he gave me of paternal tenderness led me to turn all the feelings of my heart upon him, and I felt myself his daughter. I accepted his presents, hiding none of my caprices from him, for I saw how he loved to gratify them. I heard one fatal evening that all Paris believed me the mistress of the poor old man. I was told that it was then beyond my power to recover an innocence thus gratuitously denied me. They said that the man who had abused my inexperience could not be my lover, and would not be my husband. The week in which I made this horrible discovery the duke left Paris. I was shamefully ejected from the little house where he had placed me, and which did not belong to him. Up to this point I have told you the

truth as though I stood before God ; but now, do not ask a wretched woman to give account of sufferings which are buried in her heart. The time came when I found myself married to Danton. A few days later the storm uprooted the mighty oak around which I had thrown my arms. Again I was plunged into the worst distress, and I resolved to kill myself. I don't know whether love of life, or the hope of wearying ill-fortune and of finding at the bottom of the abyss the happiness which had always escaped me were, unconsciously to myself, my advisers, or whether I was fascinated by the arguments of a young man from Vendôme, who, for the last two years, has wound himself about me like a serpent round a tree, — in short, I know not how it is that I accepted, for a payment of three hundred thousand francs, the odious mission of making an unknown man in love with me and then betraying him. I met you ; I knew you at once by one of those presentiments which never mislead us ; yet I tried to doubt my recognition, for the more I came to love you, the more the certainty appalled me. When I saved you from the hands of Hulot, I abjured the part I had taken ; I resolved to betray the slaughterers, and not their victim. I did wrong to play with men, with their lives, their principles, with myself, like a thoughtless girl who sees only sentiments in this life. I believed you loved me ; I let myself cling to the hope that my life might begin anew ; but all things have revealed my past, — even I myself, perhaps, for you must have distrusted a woman so passionate as you have found me. Alas ! is there no excuse for my love and my deception ? My life was like a troubled sleep ; I woke and thought myself a girl ; I was in Alençon, where all my memories were

pure and chaste. I had the mad simplicity to think that love would baptize me into innocence. For a moment I thought myself pure, for I had never loved. But last night your passion seemed to me true, and a voice cried to me, 'Do not deceive him.' Monsieur le marquis," she said, in a guttural voice which haughtily challenged condemnation, "know this; I am a dishonored creature, unworthy of you. From this hour I accept my fate as a lost woman. I am weary of playing a part, — the part of a woman to whom you had brought back the sanctities of her soul. Virtue is a burden to me. I should despise you if you were weak enough to marry me. The Comte de Bauvan might commit that folly, but you—you must be worthy of your future and leave me without regret. A courtesan is too exacting; I should not love you like the simple, artless girl who felt for a moment the delightful hope of being your companion, of making you happy, of doing you honor, of becoming a noble wife. But I gather from that futile hope the courage to return to a life of vice and infamy, that I may put an eternal barrier between us. I sacrifice both honor and fortune to you. The pride I take in that sacrifice will support me in my wretchedness,—fate may dispose of me as it will. I will never betray you. I shall return to Paris. There your name will be to me a part of myself, and the glory you win will console my grief. As for you, you are a man, and you will forget me. Farewell."

She darted away in the direction of the gorges of Saint-Sulpice, and disappeared before the marquis could rise to detain her. But she came back unseen, hid herself in a cavity of the rocks, and examined the young man with a curiosity mingled with doubt. Presently

she saw him walking like a man overwhelmed, without seeming to know where he went.

"Can he be weak?" she thought, when he had disappeared, and she felt she was parted from him. "Will he understand me?" She quivered. Then she turned and went rapidly towards Fougères, as though she feared the marquis might follow her into the town, where certain death awaited him.

"Francine, what did he say to you?" she asked, when the faithful girl rejoined her.

"Ah! Marie, how I pitied him. You great ladies stab a man with your tongues."

"How did he seem when he came up to you?"

"As if he saw me not at all! Oh, Marie, he loves you!"

"Yes, he loves me, or he does not love me — there is heaven or hell for me in that," she answered. "Between the two extremes there is no spot where I can set my foot."

After thus carrying out her resolution, Marie gave way to grief, and her face, beautified till then by these conflicting sentiments, changed for the worse so rapidly that in a single day, during which she floated incessantly between hope and despair, she lost the glow of beauty, and the freshness which has its source in the absence of passion or the ardor of joy. Anxious to ascertain the result of her mad enterprise, Hulot and Corentin came to see her soon after her return. She received them smiling.

"Well," she said to the commandant, whose careworn face had a questioning expression, "the fox is coming within range of your guns; you will soon have a glorious triumph over him."

“What happened?” asked Corentin, carelessly, giving Mademoiselle de Verneuil one of those oblique glances with which diplomatists of his class spy on thought.

“Ah!” she said, “the Gars is more in love than ever; I made him come with me to the gates of Fougères.”

“Your power seems to have stopped there,” remarked Corentin; “the fears of your *ci-devant* are greater than the love you inspire.”

“You judge him by yourself,” she replied, with a contemptuous look.

“Well, then,” said he, unmoved, “why did you not bring him here to your own house?”

“Commandant,” she said to Hulot, with a coaxing smile, “if he really loves me, would you blame me for saving his life and getting him to leave France?”

The old soldier came quickly up to her, took her hand, and kissed it with a sort of enthusiasm. Then he looked at her fixedly and said in a gloomy tone: “You forget my two friends and my sixty-three men.”

“Ah, commandant,” she cried, with all the naiveté of passion, “he was not accountable for that; he was deceived by a bad woman, Charette’s mistress, who would, I do believe, drink the blood of the Blues.”

“Come, Marie,” said Corentin, “don’t tease the commandant; he does not understand such jokes.”

“Hold your tongue,” she answered, “and remember that the day when you displease me too much will have no morrow for you.”

“I see, mademoiselle,” said Hulot, without bitterness, “that I must prepare for a fight.”

“You are not strong enough, my dear colonel. I saw more than six thousand men at Saint-James, — regular

troops, artillery, and English officers. But they cannot do much unless *he* leads them? I agree with Fouché, his presence is the head and front of everything."

"Are we to get his head? — that's the point," said Corentin, impatiently.

"I don't know," she answered, carelessly.

"English officers!" cried Hulot, angrily, "that's all that was wanting to make a regular brigand of him. Ha! ha! I'll give him English, I will!"

"It seems to me, citizen-diplomat," said Hulot to Corentin, after the two had taken leave and were at some distance from the house, "that you allow that girl to send you to the right-about when she pleases."

"It is quite natural for you, commandant," replied Corentin, with a thoughtful air, "to see nothing but fighting in what she said to us. You soldiers never seem to know there are various ways of making war. To use the passions of men and women like wires to be pulled for the benefit of the State; to keep the running-gear of the great machine we call government in good order, and fasten to it the desires of human nature, like baited traps which it is fun to watch, — I call *that* creating a world, like God, and putting ourselves at the centre of it!"

"You will please allow me to prefer my calling to yours," said the soldier, curtly. "You can do as you like with your running-gear; I recognize no authority but that of the minister of war. I have my orders; I shall take the field with veterans who don't skulk, and face an enemy you want to catch behind."

"Oh, you can fight if you want to," replied Corentin. "From what that girl has dropped, close-mouthed as you think she is, I can tell you that you'll have to

skirmish about, and I myself will give you the pleasure of an interview with the Gars before long."

"How so?" asked Hulot, moving back a step to get a better view of this strange individual.

"Mademoiselle de Verneuil is in love with him," replied Corentin, in a thick voice, "and perhaps he loves her. A marquis, a knight of Saint-Louis, young, brilliant, perhaps rich, — what a list of temptations! She would be foolish indeed not to look after her own interests and try to marry him rather than betray him. The girl is attempting to fool us. But I saw hesitation in her eyes. They probably have a rendezvous; perhaps they've met already. Well, to-morrow I shall have him by the forelock. Yesterday he was nothing more than the enemy of the Republic, to-day he is mine; and I tell you this, every man who has been so rash as to come between that girl and me has died upon the scaffold."

So saying, Corentin dropped into a reverie which hindered him from observing the disgust on the face of the honest soldier as he discovered the depths of this intrigue, and the mechanism of the means employed by Fouché. Hulot resolved on the spot to thwart Corentin in every way that did not conflict essentially with the success of the government, and to give the Gars a fair chance of dying honorably, sword in hand, before he could fall a prey to the executioner, for whom this agent of the detective police acknowledged himself the purveyor.

"If the First Consul would listen to me," thought Hulot, as he turned his back on Corentin, "he would leave those foxes to fight aristocrats, and send his soldiers on other business."

Corentin looked coldly after the old soldier, whose face had brightened at the resolve, and his eyes gleamed with a sardonic expression, which showed the mental superiority of this subaltern Machiavelli.

"Give an ell of blue cloth to those fellows, and hang a bit of iron at their waists," he said to himself, "and they'll think there's but one way to kill people." Then, after walking up and down awhile very slowly, he exclaimed suddenly, "Yes, the time has come, that woman shall be mine! For five years I've been drawing the net round her, and I have her now; with her, I can be a greater man in the government than Fouché himself. Yes, if she loses the only man she has ever loved, grief will give her to me, body and soul; but I must be on the watch night and day."

A few moments later the pale face of this man might have been seen through the window of a house, from which he could observe all who entered the cul-de-sac formed by the line of houses running parallel with Saint-Léonard, one of those houses being that now occupied by Mademoiselle de Verneuil. With the patience of a cat watching a mouse Corentin was there in the same place on the following morning, attentive to the slightest noise, and subjecting the passers-by to the closest examination. The day that was now beginning was a market day. Although in these calamitous times the peasants rarely risked themselves in the towns, Corentin presently noticed a small man with a gloomy face, wrapped in a goatskin, and carrying on his arm a small flat basket; he was making his way in the direction of Mademoiselle de Verneuil's house, casting careless glances about him. Corentin watched him enter the house; then he ran down into the street,

meaning to waylay the man as he left ; but on second thoughts it occurred to him that if he called unexpectedly on Mademoiselle de Verneuil he might surprise by a single glance the secret that was hidden in the basket of the emissary. Besides, he had already learned that it was impossible to extract anything from the inscrutable answers of Bretons and Normans.

“ Galope-Chopine ! ” cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil, when Francine brought the man to her. “ Does he love me ? ” she murmured to herself, in a low voice.

The instinctive hope sent a brilliant color to her cheeks and joy into her heart. Galope-Chopine looked alternately from the mistress to the maid with evident distrust of the latter ; but a sign from Mademoiselle de Verneuil reassured him.

“ Madame,” he said, “ about two o’clock *he* will be at my house waiting for you.”

Emotion prevented Mademoiselle de Verneuil from giving any other reply than a movement of her head, but the man understood her meaning. At that moment Corentin’s step was heard in the adjoining room, but Galope-Chopine showed no uneasiness, though Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s look and shudder warned him of danger, and as soon as the spy had entered the room the Chouan raised his voice to an ear-splitting tone.

“ Ha, ha ! ” he said to Francine, “ I tell you there’s Breton butter *and* Breton butter. You want the Gibarry kind, and you won’t give more than eleven sous a pound ; then why did you send me to fetch it ? It is good butter that,” he added, uncovering the basket to show the pats which Barbette had made. “ You ought to be fair, my good lady, and pay one sou more.”

His hollow voice betrayed no emotion, and his green

eyes, shaded by thick gray eyebrows, bore Corentin's piercing glance without flinching.

"Nonsense, my good man, you are not here to sell butter; you are talking to a lady who never bargained for a thing in her life. The trade you run, old fellow, will shorten you by a head in a very few days;" and Corentin, with a friendly tap on the man's shoulder, added, "you can't keep up being a spy of the Blues and a spy of the Chouans very long."

Galope-Chopine needed all his presence of mind to subdue his rage, and not deny the accusation which his avarice had made a just one. He contented himself with saying:—

"Monsieur is making game of me."

Corentin turned his back on the Chouan, but, while bowing to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, whose heart stood still, he watched him in the mirror behind her. Galope-Chopine, unaware of this, gave a glance at Francine, to which she replied by pointing to the door, and saying, "Come with me, my man, and we will settle the matter between us."

Nothing escaped Corentin, neither the fear which Mademoiselle de Verneuil could not conceal under a smile, nor her color and the contraction of her features, nor the Chouan's sign and Francine's reply; he had seen all. Convinced that Galope-Chopine was sent by the marquis, he caught the man by the long hairs of his goatskin as he was leaving the room, turned him round to face him, and said with a keen look: "Where do you live, my man? I want butter, too."

"My good monsieur," said the Chouan, "all Fougères knows where I live. I am —"

"Corentin!" exclaimed Mademoiselle de Verneuil,

interrupting Galope-Chopine. "Why do you come here at this time of day? I am scarcely dressed. Let that peasant alone; he does not understand your tricks any more than I understand the motive of them. You can go, my man."

Galope-Chopine hesitated for a moment. The indecision, real or feigned, of the poor devil, who knew not which to obey, deceived even Corentin; but the Chouan, finally, after an imperative gesture from the lady, left the room with a dragging step. Mademoiselle de Verneuil and Corentin looked at each other in silence. This time Marie's limpid eyes could not endure the gleam of cruel fire in the man's look. The resolute manner in which the spy had forced his way into her room, an expression on his face which Marie had never seen there before, the deadened tones of his shrill voice, his whole demeanor, — all these things alarmed her; she felt that a secret struggle was about to take place between them, and that he meant to employ against her all the powers of his evil influence. But though she had at this moment a full and distinct view of the gulf into which she was plunging, she gathered strength from her love to shake off the icy chill of these presentiments.

"Corentin," she said, with a sort of gayety, "I hope you are going to let me make my toilet?"

"Marie," he said, — "yes, permit me to call you so, — you don't yet know me. Listen; a much less sagacious man than I would see your love for the Marquis de Montauran. I have several times offered you my heart and hand. You have never thought me worthy of you; and perhaps you are right. But however much you may feel yourself too high, too beautiful, too superior

for me, I can compel you to come down to my level. My ambition and my maxims have given you a low opinion of me; frankly, you are mistaken. Men are not worth even what I rate them at, and that is next to nothing. I shall certainly attain a position which will gratify your pride. Who will ever love you better, or make you more absolutely mistress of yourself and of him, than the man who has loved you now for five years? Though I run the risk of exciting your suspicions, — for you cannot conceive that any one should renounce an idolized woman out of excessive love, — I will now prove to you the unselfishness of my passion. Don't shake your head. If the marquis loves you, marry him; but before you do so, make sure of his sincerity. I could not endure to see you deceived, for I do prefer your happiness to my own. My resolution may surprise you; lay it to the prudence of a man who is not so great a fool as to wish to possess a woman against her will. I blame myself, not you, for the failure of my efforts to win you. I hoped to do so by submission and devotion, for I have long, as you well know, tried to make you happy according to my lights; but you have never in any way rewarded me."

"I have suffered you to be near me," she said, laughingly.

"Add that you regret it."

"After involving me in this infamous enterprise, do you think that I have any thanks to give you?"

"When I proposed to you an enterprise which was not exempt from blame to timid minds," he replied, audaciously, "I had only your own prosperity in view. As for me, whether I succeed or fail, I can make all results further my ends. If you marry Montauran, I

shall be delighted to serve the Bourbons in Paris, where I am already a member of the Clichy club. Now, if circumstances were to put me in correspondence with the princes I should abandon the interests of the Republic, which is already on its last legs. General Bonaparte is much too able a man not to know that he can't be in England and in Italy at the same time, and that is how the Republic is about to fall. I have no doubt he made the 18th Brumaire to obtain greater advantages over the Bourbons when it came to treating with them. He is a long-headed fellow, and very keen; but the politicians will get the better of him on their own ground. The betrayal of France is another scruple which men of superiority leave to fools. I won't conceal from you that I have come here with the necessary authority to open negotiations with the Chouans, *or* to further their destruction, as the case may be; for Fouché, my patron, is deep; he has always played a double part; during the Terror he was as much for Robespierre as for Danton — ”

“ Whom you basely abandoned,” she said.

“ Nonsense; he is dead, — forget him,” replied Corentin. “ Come, speak honestly to me; I have set you the example. Old Hulot is deeper than he looks; if you want to escape his vigilance, I can help you. Remember that he holds all the valleys and will instantly detect a rendezvous. If you make one in Fougères, under his very eyes, you are at the mercy of his patrols. See how quickly he knew that this Chouan had entered your house. His military sagacity will show him that your movements betray those of the Gars — if Montauran loves you.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil had never listened to a

more affectionate voice ; Corentin certainly seemed sincere, and spoke confidently. The poor girl's heart was so open to generous impressions that she was on the point of betraying her secret to the serpent who had her in his folds, when it occurred to her that she had no proof beyond his own words of his sincerity, and she felt no scruple in blinding him.

"Yes," she said, "you are right, Corentin. I do love the marquis, but he does not love me — at least, I fear so ; I can't help fearing that the appointment he wishes me to make with him is a trap."

"But you said yesterday that he came as far as Fougères with you," returned Corentin. "If he had meant to do you bodily harm you wouldn't be here now."

"You've a cold heart, Corentin. You can draw shrewd conclusions as to the ordinary events of human life, but not on those of a passion. Perhaps that is why you inspire me with such repulsion. As you are so clear-sighted, you may be able to tell me why a man from whom I separated myself violently two days ago now wishes me to meet him in a house at Florigny on the road to Mayenne."

At this avowal, which seemed to escape her with a recklessness that was not unnatural in so passionate a creature, Corentin flushed, for he was still young ; but he gave her a sidelong penetrating look, trying to search her soul. The girl's artlessness was so well played, however, that she deceived the spy, and he answered with crafty good-humor, "Shall I accompany you at a distance ? I can take a few soldiers with me, and be ready to help and obey you."

"Very good," she said ; "but promise me, on your

honor, — no, I don't believe in it; by your salvation, — but you don't believe in God; by your soul, — but I don't suppose you have any! what pledge *can* you give me of your fidelity? and yet you expect me to trust you, and put more than my life — my love, my vengeance — into your hands."

The slight smile which crossed the pallid lips of the spy showed Mademoiselle de Verneuil the danger she had just escaped. The man, whose nostrils contracted instead of dilating, took the hand of his victim, kissed it with every mark of the deepest respect, and left the room with a bow that was not devoid of grace.

Three hours after this scene Mademoiselle de Verneuil, who feared the man's return, left the town furtively by the Porte Saint-Léonard, and made her way through the labyrinth of paths to the cottage of Galope-Chopine, led by the dream of at last finding happiness, and also by the purpose of saving her lover from the danger that threatened him.

During this time Corentin had gone to find the commandant. He had some difficulty in recognizing Hulot when he found him in a little square, where he was busy with certain military preparations. The brave veteran had made a sacrifice, the full merit of which it may be difficult to appreciate. His queue and his moustache were cut off, and his hair had a sprinkling of powder. He had changed his uniform for a goatskin, wore hob-nailed shoes, a belt full of pistols, and carried a heavy carbine. In this costume he was reviewing about two hundred of the natives of Fougères, all in the same kind of dress, which was fitted to deceive the eye of the most practised Chouan. The warlike spirit of the little town and the Breton character were fully displayed in this

scene, which was not at all uncommon. Here and there a few mothers and sisters were bringing to their sons and brothers gourds filled with brandy, or forgotten pistols. Several old men were examining into the number and condition of the cartridges of these young national guards dressed in the guise of Chouans, whose gayety was more in keeping with a hunting expedition than the dangerous duty they were undertaking. To them, such encounters with Chouannerie, where the Breton of the town fought the Breton of the country district, had taken the place of the old chivalric tournaments. This patriotic enthusiasm may possibly have been connected with certain purchases of the "national domain." Still, the benefits of the Revolution which were better understood and appreciated in the towns, party spirit, and a certain national delight in war, had a great deal to do with their ardor.

Hulot, much gratified, was going through the ranks and getting information from Gudin, on whom he was now bestowing the confidence and good-will he had formerly shown to Merle and Gérard. A number of the inhabitants stood about watching the preparations, and comparing the conduct of their tumultuous contingent with the regulars of Hulot's brigade. Motionless and silent the Blues were awaiting, under control of their officers, the orders of the commandant, whose figure they followed with their eyes as he passed from rank to rank of the contingent. When Corentin came near the old warrior he could not help smiling at the change which had taken place in him. He looked like a portrait that has little or no resemblance to the original.

"What 's all this?" asked Corentin.

"Come with us under fire, and you'll find out," replied Hulot.

"Oh! I'm not a Fougères man," said Corentin.

"Easy to see that, citizen," retorted Gudin.

A few contemptuous laughs came from the nearest ranks.

"Do you think," said Corentin, sharply, "that the only way to serve France is with bayonets?"

Then he turned his back to the laughers, and asked a woman beside him if she knew the object of the expedition.

"Hey! my good man, the Chouans are at Florigny. They say there are more than three thousand, and they are coming to take Fougères."

"Florigny?" cried Corentin, turning white; "then the rendezvous is not there! Is Florigny on the road to Mayenne?" he asked.

"There are not two Florignys," replied the woman, pointing in the direction of the summit of La Pèlerine.

"Are you going in search of the Marquis de Montauran?" said Corentin to Hulot.

"Perhaps I am," answered the commandant, curtly.

"He is not at Florigny," said Corentin. "Send your troops there by all means; but keep a few of those imitation Chouans of yours with you, and wait for me."

"He is too malignant not to know what he's about," thought Hulot as Corentin made off rapidly, "he's the king of spies."

Hulot ordered the battalion to start. The republican soldiers marched without drums and silently through the narrow suburb which led to the Mayenne high-road, forming a blue and red line among the trees and houses. The disguised guard followed them; but

Hulot, detaining Gudin and about a score of the smartest young fellows of the town, remained in the little square, awaiting Corentin, whose mysterious manner had piqued his curiosity. Francine herself told the astute spy, whose suspicions she changed into certainty, of her mistress's departure. Inquiring of the post guard at the Porte Saint-Léonard, he learned that Mademoiselle de Verneuil had passed that way. Rushing to the Promenade, he was, unfortunately, in time to see her movements. Though she was wearing a green dress and hood, to be less easily distinguished, the rapidity of her almost distracted step enabled him to follow her with his eye through the leafless hedges, and to guess the point towards which she was hurrying.

"Ha!" he cried, "you said you were going to Florigny, but you are in the valley of Gibarry! I am a fool, she has tricked me! No matter, I can light my lamp by day as well as by night."

Corentin, satisfied that he knew the place of the lovers' rendezvous, returned in all haste to the little square, which Hulot, resolved not to wait any longer, was just quitting to rejoin his troops.

"Halt, general!" he cried to the commandant, who turned round.

He then told Hulot the events relating to the marquis and Mademoiselle de Verneuil, and showed him the scheme of which he held a thread. Hulot, struck by his perspicacity, seized him by the arm.

"God's thunder! citizen, you are right," he cried. "The brigands are making a false attack over there to keep the coast clear; but the two columns I sent to scour the environs between Antrain and Vitré have not yet returned, so we shall have plenty of reinforcements

if we need them ; and I dare say we shall, for the Gars is not such a fool as to risk his life without a body-guard of those damned owls. Gudín," he added, "go and tell Captain Lebrun that he must rub those fellows' noses at Florigny without me, and come back yourself in a flash. You know the paths. I'll wait till you return, and *then* — we'll avenge those murders at La Vivetière. 'Thunder! how he runs,' he added, seeing Gudín disappear as if by magic. "Gérard would have loved him."

On his return Gudín found Hulot's little band increased in numbers by the arrival of several soldiers taken from the various posts in the town. The commandant ordered him to choose a dozen of his compatriots who could best counterfeit the Chouans, and take them out by the Porte Saint-Léonard, so as to creep round the side of the Saint-Sulpice rocks which overlooks the valley of Couësson and on which was the hovel of Galope-Chopine. Hulot himself went out with the rest of his troop by the Porte Saint-Sulpice, to reach the summit of the same rocks, where, according to his calculations, he ought to meet the men under Beau-Pied, whom he meant to use as a line of sentinels from the suburb of Saint-Sulpice to the Nid-aux-Crocs.

Corentin, satisfied with having delivered over the fate of the Gars to his implacable enemies, went with all speed to the Promenade, so as to follow with his eyes the military arrangements of the commandant. He soon saw Gudín's little squad issuing from the valley of the Nançon and following the line of the rocks to the great valley, while Hulot, creeping round the castle of Fougères, was mounting the dangerous path which leads to the summit of Saint-Sulpice. The two

companies were therefore advancing on parallel lines. The trees and shrubs, draped by the rich arabesques of the hoarfrost, threw whitish reflections which enabled the watcher to see the gray lines of the squads in motion. When Hulot reached the summit of the rocks, he detached all the soldiers in uniform from his main body, and made them into a line of sentinels, each communicating with the other, the first with Gudin, the last with Hulot; so that no shrub could escape the bayonets of the three lines which were now in a position to hunt the Gars across field and mountain.

“The sly old wolf!” thought Corentin, as the shining muzzle of the last gun disappeared in the bushes. “The Gars is done for. If Marie had only betrayed that damned marquis, she and I would have been united in the strongest of all bonds—a vile deed. But she’s mine, in any case.”

The twelve young men under Gudin soon reached the base of the rocks of Saint-Sulpice. Here Gudin himself left the road with six of them, jumping the stiff hedge into the first field of gorse that he came to, while the other six by his orders did the same on the other side of the road. Gudin advanced to an apple-tree which happened to be in the middle of the field. Hearing the rustle of this movement through the gorse, seven or eight men, at the head of whom was Beau-Pied, hastily hid behind some chestnut-trees which topped the bank of this particular field. Gudin’s men did not see them, in spite of the white reflections of the hoarfrost and their own practised sight.

“Hush! here they are,” said Beau-Pied, cautiously putting out his head. “The brigands have more men than we, but we have ’em at the muzzles of our guns,

and we must n't miss them, or, by the Lord, we are not fit to be soldiers of the pope."

By this time Gudin's keen eyes had discovered a few muzzles pointing through the branches at his little squad. Just then eight voices cried in derision, "Qui vive?" and eight shots followed. The balls whistled round Gudin and his men. One fell, another was shot in the arm. The five others who were safe and sound replied with a volley and the cry, "Friends!" Then they marched rapidly on their assailants so as to reach them before they had time to reload.

"We did not know how true we spoke," cried Gudin, as he recognized the uniforms and the battered hats of his own brigade. "Well, we behaved like Bretons, and fought before explaining."

The other men were stupefied on recognizing the little company.

"Who the devil would have known them in those goatskins?" cried Beau-Pied, dismally.

"It is a misfortune," said Gudin, "but we are all innocent if you were not informed of the sortie. What are you doing here?" he asked.

"A dozen of those Chouans are amusing themselves by picking us off, and we are getting away as best we can, like poisoned rats; but by dint of scrambling over these hedges and rocks — may the lightning blast 'em! — our compasses have got so rusty we are forced to take a rest. I think those brigands are now somewhere near the old hovel where you see that smoke."

"Good!" cried Gudin. "You," he added to Beau-Pied and his men, "fall back towards the rocks through the fields, and join the line of sentinels you'll find there. You can't go with us, because you are in uniform. We

mean to make an end of those curs now ; the Gars is with them. I can't stop to tell you more. To the right, march ! and don't administer any more shots to our own goatskins ; you'll know ours by their cravats, which they twist round their necks and don't tie."

Gudin left his two wounded men under the apple-tree, and marched towards Galope-Chopine's cottage, which Beau-Pied had pointed out to him, the smoke from the chimney serving as a guide.

While the young officer was thus closing in upon the Chouans, the little detachment under Hulot had reached a point still parallel with that at which Gudin had arrived. The old soldier, at the head of his men, was silently gliding along the hedges with the ardor of a young man ; he jumped them from time to time actively enough, casting his wary eyes to the heights and listening with the ear of a hunter to every noise. In the third field to which he came to he found a woman about thirty years old, with bent back, hoeing the ground vigorously, while a small boy with a sickle in his hand was knocking the hoarfrost from the rushes, which he cut and laid in a heap. At the noise Hulot made in jumping the hedge, the boy and his mother raised their heads. Hulot mistook the young woman for an old one, naturally enough. Wrinkles, coming long before their time, furrowed her face and neck ; she was clothed so grotesquely in a worn-out goatskin that if it had not been for a dirty yellow petticoat, a distinctive mark of sex, Hulot would hardly have known the gender she belonged to ; for the meshes of her long black hair were twisted up and hidden by a red worsted cap. The tatters of the little boy did not cover him, but left his skin exposed.

“Ho! old woman!” called Hulot, in a low voice, approaching her, “where is the Gars?”

The twenty men who accompanied Hulot now jumped the hedge.

“Hey! if you want the Gars you ’ll have to go back the way you came,” said the woman, with a suspicious glance at the troop.

“Did I ask you the road to Fougères, old carcass?” said Hulot, roughly. “By Saint-Anne of Auray, have you seen the Gars go by?”

“I don’t know what you mean,” replied the woman, bending over her hoe.

“You damned garce, do you want to have us eaten up by the Blues who are after us?”

At these words the woman raised her head and gave another look of distrust at the troop as she replied, “How can the Blues be after you? I have just seen eight or ten of them who were going back to Fougères by the lower road.”

“One would think she meant to stab us with that nose of hers!” cried Hulot. “Here, look, you old nanny-goat!”

And he showed her in the distance three or four of his sentinels, whose hats, guns, and uniforms it was easy to recognize.

“Are you going to let those fellows cut the throats of men who are sent by Marche-à-Terre to protect the Gars?” he cried, angrily.

“Ah, beg pardon,” said the woman; “but it is so easy to be deceived. What parish do you belong to?”

“Saint-Georges,” replied two or three of the men, in the Breton patois, “and we are dying of hunger.”

“Well, there,” said the woman; “do you see that

smoke down there? that's my house. Follow the path to the right, and you will come to the rock above it. Perhaps you'll meet my man on the way. Galope-Chopine is sure to be on the watch to warn the Gars. He is spending the day in our house," she said, proudly, "as you seem to know."

"Thank you, my good woman," replied Hulot. "Forward, march! God's thunder! we've got him," he added, speaking to his men.

The detachment followed its leader at a quick step through the path pointed out to them. The wife of Galope-Chopine turned pale as she heard the un-Catholic oath of the so-called Chouan. She looked at the gaiters and goatskins of his men, then she caught her boy in her arms, and sat down on the ground, saying, "May the holy Virgin of Auray and the ever blessed Saint-Labre have pity upon us! Those men are not ours; their shoes have no nails in them. Run down by the lower road and warn your father; you may save his head," she said to the boy, who disappeared like a deer among the bushes.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil met no one on her way, neither Blues nor Chouans. Seeing the column of blue smoke which was rising from the half-ruined chimney of Galope-Chopine's melancholy dwelling, her heart was seized with a violent palpitation, the rapid, sonorous beating of which rose to her throat in waves. She stopped, rested her hand against a tree, and watched the smoke which was serving as a beacon to the foes as well as to the friends of the young chieftain. Never had she felt such overwhelming emotion.

"Ah! I love him too much," she said, with a sort of

despair. "To-day, perhaps, I shall no longer be mistress of myself —"

She hurried over the distance which separated her from the cottage, and reached the courtyard, the filth of which was now stiffened by the frost. The big dog sprang up barking, but a word from Galope-Chopine silenced him and he wagged his tail. As she entered the house Marie gave a look which included everything. The marquis was not there. She breathed more freely, and saw with pleasure that the Chouan had taken some pains to clean the dirty and only room in his hovel. He now took his duck-gun, bowed silently to his guest and left the house, followed by his dog. Marie went to the threshold of the door and watched him as he took the path to the right of his hut. From there she could overlook a series of fields, the curious openings to which formed a perspective of gates; for the leafless trees and hedges were no longer a barrier to a full view of the country. When the Chouan's broad hat was out of sight Mademoiselle de Verneuil turned round to look for the church at Fougères, but the shed concealed it. She cast her eyes over the valley of the Couësson, which lay before her like a vast sheet of muslin, the whiteness of which still further dulled a gray sky laden with snow. It was one of those days when nature seems dumb and noises are absorbed by the atmosphere. Therefore, though the Blues and their contingent were marching through the country in three lines, forming a triangle which drew together as they neared the cottage, the silence was so profound that Mademoiselle de Verneuil was overcome by a presentiment which added a sort of physical pain to her mental torture. Misfortune was in the air.

At last, in a spot where a little curtain of wood closed the perspective of gates, she saw a young man jumping the barriers like a squirrel and running with astonishing rapidity. "It is he!" she thought.

The Gars was dressed as a Chouan, with a musket slung from his shoulder over his goatskin, and would have been quite disguised were it not for the grace of his movements. Marie withdrew hastily into the cottage, obeying one of those instinctive promptings which are as little explicable as fear itself. The young man was soon beside her before the chimney, where a bright fire was burning. Both were voiceless, fearing to look at each other, or even to make a movement. One and the same hope united them, the same doubt; it was agony, it was joy.

"Monsieur," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil at last, in a trembling voice, "your safety alone has brought me here."

"My safety!" he said, bitterly.

"Yes," she answered; "so long as I stay at Fougères your life is threatened, and I love you too well not to leave it. I go to-night."

"Leave me! ah, dear love, I shall follow you."

"Follow me! — the Blues?"

"Dear Marie, what have the Blues to do with our love?"

"But it seems impossible that you can stay with me in France, and still more impossible that you should leave it with me."

"Is there anything impossible to those who love?"

"Ah, true! true! all is possible — have I not the courage to resign you, for your sake?"

"What! you could give yourself to a hateful being

whom you did not love, and you refuse to make the happiness of a man who adores you, whose life you fill, who swears to be yours, and yours only. Hear me, Marie, do you love me?"

"Yes," she said.

"Then be mine."

"You forget the infamous career of a lost woman; I return to it, I leave you — yes, that I may not bring upon your head the contempt that falls on mine. Without that fear, perhaps —"

"But if I fear nothing?"

"Can I be sure of that? I am distrustful. Who could be otherwise in a position like mine? If the love we inspire cannot last at least it should be complete, and help us to bear with joy the injustice of the world. But you, what have you done for me? You desire me. Do you think that lifts you above other men? Suppose I bade you renounce your ideas, your hopes, your king (who will, perhaps, laugh when he hears you have died for him, while I would die for you with sacred joy!); or suppose I should ask you to send your submission to the First Consul so that you could follow me to Paris, or go with me to America, — away from the world where all is vanity; suppose I thus tested you, to know if you loved me for myself as at this moment I love you? To say all in a word, if I wished, instead of rising to your level, that you should fall to mine, what would you do?"

"Hush, Marie, be silent, do not slander yourself," he cried. "Poor child, I comprehend you. If my first desire was passion, my passion now is love. Dear soul of my soul, you are as noble as your name, I know it, — as great as you are beautiful. I am noble enough, I

feel myself great enough to force the world to receive you. Is it because I foresee in you the source of endless, incessant pleasure, or because I find in your soul those precious qualities which make a man forever love the one woman? I do not know the cause, but this I know — that my love for you is boundless. I know I can no longer live without you. Yes, life would be unbearable unless you are ever with me.”

“ Ever with you ! ”

“ Ah ! Marie, will you not understand me ? ”

“ You think to flatter me by the offer of your hand and name,” she said, with apparent haughtiness, but looking fixedly at the marquis as if to detect his inmost thought. “ How do you know you would love me six months hence ? and then what would be my fate ? No, a mistress is the only woman who is sure of a man’s heart ; duty, law, society, the interests of children, are poor auxiliaries. If her power lasts it gives her joys and flatteries which make the trials of life endurable. But to be your wife and become a drag upon you, — rather than that, I prefer a passing love and a true one, though death and misery be its end. Yes, I could be a virtuous mother, a devoted wife ; but to keep those instincts firmly in a woman’s soul the man must not marry her in a rush of passion. Besides, how do I know that you will please me to-morrow ? No, I will not bring evil upon you ; I leave Brittany,” she said, observing hesitation in his eyes. “ I return to Fougères now, where you cannot come to me — ”

“ I can ! and if to-morrow you see smoke on the rocks of Saint-Sulpice you will know that I shall be with you at night, your lover, your husband, — what you will that I be to you ; I brave all ! ”

“ Ah ! Alphonse, you love me well,” she said, passionately, “ to risk your life before you give it to me.”

He did not answer ; he looked at her and her eyes fell ; but he read in her ardent face a passion equal to his own, and he held out his arms to her. A sort of madness overcame her, and she let herself fall softly on his breast, resolved to yield to him, and turn this yielding to great results, — staking upon it her future happiness, which would become more certain if she came victorious from this crucial test. But her head had scarcely touched her lover’s shoulder when a slight noise was heard without. She tore herself from his arms as if suddenly awakened, and sprang from the cottage. Her coolness came back to her, and she thought of the situation.

“ He might have accepted me and scorned me,” she reflected. “ Ah ! if I could think that, I would kill him. But not yet ! ” she added, catching sight of Beau-Pied, to whom she made a sign which the soldier was quick to understand. He turned on his heel, pretending to have seen nothing. Mademoiselle de Verneuil re-entered the cottage, putting her finger to her lips to enjoin silence.

“ They are there ! ” she whispered in a frightened voice.

“ Who ? ”

“ The Blues.”

“ Ah ! must I die without one kiss ! ”

“ Take it,” she said.

- . He caught her to him, cold and unresisting, and gathered from her lips a kiss of horror and of joy, for while it was the first, it might also be the last. Then they went together to the door and looked cautiously out. The

marquis saw Gudin and his men holding the paths leading to the valley. Then he turned to the line of gates where the first rotten trunk was guarded by five men. Without an instant's pause, he jumped on the barrel of cider and struck a hole through the thatch of the roof, from which to spring upon the rocks behind the house; but he drew his head hastily back through the gap he had made, for Hulot was on the height; his retreat was cut off in that direction. The marquis turned and looked at his mistress, who uttered a cry of despair; for she heard the tramp of the three detachments near the house.

"Go out first," he said; "you shall save me."

Hearing the words, to her all-glorious, she went out and stood before the door. The marquis loaded his musket. Measuring with his eye the space between the door of the hut and the old rotten trunk where seven men stood, the Gars fired into their midst and sprang forward instantly, forcing a passage through them. The three troops rushed towards the opening through which he had passed, and saw him running across the field with incredible celerity.

"Fire! fire! a thousand devils! You're not Frenchmen! Fire, I say!" called Hulot.

As he shouted these words from the height above, his men and Gudin's fired a volley, which was fortunately ill-aimed. The marquis reached the gate of the next field, but as he did so he was almost caught by Gudin, who was close upon his heels. The Gars redoubled his speed. Nevertheless, he and his pursuer reached the next barrier together; but the marquis dashed his musket at Gudin's head with so good an aim that he stopped his rush. It is impossible to depict the anxiety betrayed by Marie, or the interest of

Hulot and his troops as they watched the scene. They all, unconsciously and silently, repeated the gestures which they saw the runners making. The Gars and Gudin reached the little wood together, but as they did so the latter stopped and darted behind a tree. About twenty Chouans, afraid to fire at a distance lest they should kill their leader, rushed from the copse and riddled the tree with balls. Hulot's men advanced at a run to save Gudin, who, being without arms, retreated from tree to tree, seizing his opportunity as the Chouans reloaded. His danger was soon over. Hulot and the Blues met him at the spot where the marquis had thrown his musket. At this instant Gudin perceived his adversary sitting among the trees and out of breath, and he left his comrades firing at the Chouans, who had retreated behind a lateral hedge; slipping round them, he darted towards the marquis with the agility of a wild animal. Observing this manœuvre the Chouans set up a cry to warn their leader; then, having fired on the Blues and their contingent with the gusto of poachers, they boldly made a rush for them; but Hulot's men sprang through the hedge which served them as a rampart and took a bloody revenge. The Chouans then gained the road which skirted the fields and took to the heights which Hulot had committed the blunder of abandoning. Before the Blues had time to reform, the Chouans were entrenched behind the rocks, where they could fire with impunity on the Republicans if the latter made any attempt to dislodge them.

While Hulot and his soldiers went slowly towards the little wood to meet Gudin, the men from Fougères busied themselves in rifling the dead Chouans and dispatching those who still lived. In this fearful war

neither party took prisoners. The marquis having made good his escape, the Chouans and the Blues mutually recognized their respective positions and the uselessness of continuing the fight; so that both sides prepared to retreat.

“Ha! ha!” cried one of the Fougères men, busy about the bodies, “here’s a bird with yellow wings.”

And he showed his companions a purse full of gold which he had just found in the pocket of a stout man dressed in black.

“What’s this?” said another, pulling a breviary from the dead man’s coat.

“Communion bread — he’s a priest!” cried the first man, flinging the breviary on the ground.

“Here’s a wretch!” cried a third, finding only two crowns in the pockets of the body he was stripping, “a cheat!”

“But he’s got a fine pair of shoes!” said a soldier, beginning to pull them off.

“You can’t have them unless they fall to your share,” said the Fougères man, dragging the dead feet away and flinging the boots on a heap of clothing already collected.

Another Chouan took charge of the money, so that lots might be drawn as soon as the troops were all assembled. When Hulot returned with Gudin, whose last attempt to overtake the Gars was useless as well as perilous, he found about a score of his own men and thirty of the contingent standing around eleven of the enemy, whose naked bodies were thrown into a ditch at the foot of the bank.

“Soldiers!” cried Hulot, sternly. “I forbid you to share that clothing. Form in line, quick!”

"Commandant," said a soldier, pointing to his shoes, at the points of which five bare toes could be seen on each foot, "all right about the money, but those boots," motioning to a pair of hob-nailed shoes with the butt of his gun, "would fit me like a glove."

"Do you want to put English shoes on your feet?" retorted Hulot.

"But," said one of the Fougères men, respectfully, "we've divided the booty all through the war."

"I don't prevent you civilians from following your own ways," replied Hulot, roughly.

"Here, Gudin, here's a purse with three louis," said the officer who was distributing the money. "You have run hard and the commandant won't prevent your taking it."

Hulot looked askance at Gudin, and saw that he turned pale.

"It's my uncle's purse!" exclaimed the young man.

Exhausted as he was with his run, he sprang to the mound of bodies, and the first that met his eyes was that of his uncle. But he had hardly recognized the rubicund face now furrowed with blue lines, and seen the stiffened arms and the gunshot wound before he gave a stifled cry, exclaiming, "Let us be off, commandant."

The Blues started. Hulot gave his arm to his young friend.

"God's thunder!" he cried. "Never mind, it is no great matter."

"But he is dead," said Gudin, "dead! He was my only relation, and though he cursed me, still he loved me. If the king returns, the neighborhood will want my head, and my poor uncle would have saved it."

“What a fool Gudin is,” said one of the men who had stayed behind to share the spoils; “his uncle was rich, and he has n’t had time to make a will and disinherit him.”

The division over, the men of Fougères rejoined the little battalion of the Blues on their way to the town.

Towards midnight the cottage of Galope-Chopine, hitherto the scene of life without a care, was full of dread and horrible anxiety. Barbette and her little boy returned at the supper-hour, one with her heavy burden of rushes, the other carrying fodder for the cattle. Entering the hut, they looked about in vain for Galope-Chopine; the miserable chamber never looked to them as large, so empty was it. The fire was out, and the darkness, the silence, seemed to tell of some disaster. Barbette hastened to make a blaze, and to light two *oribus*, the name given to candles made of pitch in the region between the villages of Amorique and the Upper Loire, and still used beyond Amboise in the Vendomois districts. Barbette did these things with the slowness of a person absorbed by one overpowering feeling. She listened to every sound. Deceived by the whistling of the wind she went often to the door of the hut, returning sadly. She cleaned two beakers, filled them with cider, and placed them on the long table. Now and again she looked at her boy, who watched the baking of the buckwheat cakes, but did not speak to him. The lad’s eyes happened to rest on the nails which usually held his father’s duck-gun, and Barbette trembled as she noticed that the gun was gone. The silence was broken only by the lowing of a cow or the splash of the cider as it dropped at regular intervals

from the bung of the cask. The poor woman sighed while she poured into three brown earthenware porringers a sort of soup made of milk, biscuit broken into bits, and boiled chestnuts.

"They must have fought in the field next to the Bérandière," said the boy.

"Go and see," replied his mother.

The child ran to the place where the fighting had, as he said, taken place. In the moonlight he found the heap of bodies, but his father was not among them, and he came back whistling joyously, having picked up several five-franc pieces trampled in the mud and overlooked by the victors. His mother was sitting on a stool beside the fire, employed in spinning flax. He made a negative sign to her, and then, ten o'clock having struck from the tower of Saint-Léonard, he went to bed, muttering a prayer to the holy Virgin of Auray. At dawn, Barbette, who had not closed her eyes, gave a cry of joy, as she heard in the distance a sound she knew well of hobnailed shoes, and soon after Galope-Chopine's scowling face presented itself.

"Thanks to Saint-Labre," he said, "to whom I owe a candle, the Gars is safe. Don't forget that we now owe three candles to the saint."

He seized a beaker of cider and emptied it at a draught without drawing breath. When his wife had served his soup and taken his gun and he himself was seated on the wooden bench, he said, looking at the fire: "I can't make out how the Blues got here. The fighting was at Florigny. Who the devil could have told them that the Gars was in our house; no one knew it but he and his handsome garce and we —"

Barbette turned white.

"They made me believe they were the gars of Saint-Georges," she said, trembling, "it was I who told them the Gars was here."

Galope-Chopine turned pale himself and dropped his porringer on the table.

"I sent the boy to warn you," said Barbette, frightened, "did n't you meet him?"

The Chouan rose and struck his wife so violently that she dropped, pale as death, upon the bed.

"You cursed woman," he said, "you have killed me!" Then seized with remorse, he took her in his arms. "Barbette!" he cried, "Barbette! — Holy Virgin, my hand was too heavy!"

"Do you think," she said, opening her eyes, "that Marche-à-Terre will hear of it?"

"The Gars will certainly inquire who betrayed him."

"Will he tell it to Marche-à-Terre?"

"Marche-à-Terre and Pille-Miche were both at Florigny."

Barbette breathed easier.

"If they touch a hair of your head," she cried, "I'll rinse their glasses with vinegar."

"Ah! I can't eat," said Galope-Chopine, anxiously.

His wife set another pitcher full of cider before him, but he paid no heed to it. Two big tears rolled from the woman's eyes and moistened the deep furrows of her withered face.

"Listen to me, wife; to-morrow morning you must gather fagots on the rocks of Saint-Sulpice, to the right of Saint-Léonard and set fire to them. That is a signal agreed upon between the Gars and the old rector of Saint-Georges who is to come and say mass for him."

"Is the Gars going to Fougères?"

“Yes, to see his handsome garce. I have been sent here and there all day about it. I think he is going to marry her and carry her off; for he told me to hire horses and have them ready on the road to Saint-Malo.”

Thereupon Galope-Chopine, who was tired out, went to bed for an hour or two, at the end of which time he again departed. Later, on the following morning, he returned, having carefully fulfilled all the commissions entrusted to him by the Gars. Finding that Marche-à-Terre and Pille-Miche had not appeared at the cottage, he relieved the apprehensions of his wife, who went off, reassured, to the rocks of Saint-Sulpice, where she had collected the night before several piles of fagots, now covered with the hoarfrost. The boy went with her, carrying fire in a broken wooden shoe.

Hardly had his wife and son passed out of sight behind the shed when Galope-Chopine heard the noise of men jumping the successive barriers, and he could dimly see, through the fog which was growing thicker, the forms of two men like moving shadows.

“It is Marche-à-Terre and Pille-Miche,” he said, mentally; then he shuddered. The two Chouans entered the courtyard and showed their gloomy faces under the broad-brimmed hats which made them look like the figures which engravers introduce into their landscapes.

“Good-morning, Galope-Chopine,” said Marche-à-Terre, gravely.

“Good-morning, Monsieur Marche-à-Terre,” replied the other, humbly. “Will you come in and drink a drop? I’ve some cold buckwheat cake and fresh-made butter.”

“That’s not to be refused, cousin,” said Pille-Miche.

The two Chouans entered the cottage. So far there

was nothing alarming for the master of the house, who hastened to fill three beakers from his huge cask of cider, while Marche-à-Terre and Pille-Miche, sitting on the polished benches on each side of the long table, cut the cake and spread it with the rich yellow butter from which the milk spurted as the knife smoothed it. Galope-Chopine placed the beakers full of frothing cider before his guests, and the three Chouans began to eat; but from time to time the master of the house cast side-long glances at Marche-à-Terre as he drank his cider.

"Lend me your snuff-box," said Marche-à-Terre to Pille-Miche.

Having shaken several pinches into the palm of his hand the Breton inhaled the tobacco like a man who is making ready for serious business.

"It is cold," said Pille-Miche, rising to shut the upper half of the door.

The daylight, already dim with fog, now entered only through the little window, and feebly lighted the room and the two seats; the fire, however, gave out a ruddy glow. Galope-Chopine refilled the beakers, but his guests refused to drink again, and throwing aside their large hats looked at him solemnly. Their gestures and the look they gave him terrified Galope-Chopine, who fancied he saw blood in the red woollen caps they wore.

"Fetch your axe," said Marche-à-Terre.

"But, Monsieur Marche-à-Terre, what do you want it for?"

"Come, cousin, you know very well," said Pille-Miche, pocketing his snuff-box which Marche-à-Terre returned to him; "you are condemned."

The two Chouans rose together and took their guns.

"Monsieur Marche-à-Terre, I never said one word about the Gars — "

"I told you to fetch your axe," said Marche-à-Terre.

The hapless man knocked against the wooden bedstead of his son, and several five-franc pieces rolled on the floor. Pille-Miche picked them up.

"Ho! ho! the Blues paid you in new money," cried Marche-à-Terre.

"As true as that's the image of Saint-Labre," said Galope-Chopine, "I have told nothing. Barbette mistook the Fougères men for the gars of Saint-Georges, and that's the whole of it."

"Why do you tell things to your wife?" said Marche-à-Terre, roughly.

"Besides, cousin, we don't want excuses, we want your axe. You are condemned."

At a sign from his companion, Pille-Miche helped Marche-à-Terre to seize the victim. Finding himself in their grasp Galope-Chopine lost all power and fell on his knees holding up his hands to his slayers in desperation.

"My friends, my good friends, my cousin," he said, "what will become of my little boy?"

"I will take charge of him," said Marche-à-Terre.

"My good comrades," cried the victim, turning livid. "I am not fit to die. Don't make me go without confession. You have the right to take my life, but you've no right to make me lose a blessed eternity."

"That is true," said Marche-à-Terre, addressing Pille-Miche.

The two Chouans waited a moment in much uncertainty, unable to decide this case of conscience. Galope-Chopine listened to the rustling of the wind as

though he still had hope. Suddenly Pille-Miche took him by the arm into a corner of the hut.

“Confess your sins to me,” he said, “and I will tell them to a priest of the true Church, and if there is any penance to do I will do it for you.”

Galope-Chopine obtained some respite by the way in which he confessed his sins; but in spite of their number and the circumstances of each crime, he came finally to the end of them.

“Cousin,” he said, imploringly, “since I am speaking to you as I would to my confessor, I do assure you, by the holy name of God, that I have nothing to reproach myself with except for having, now and then, buttered my bread on both sides; and I call on Saint-Labre, who is there over the chimney-piece, to witness that I have never said one word about the Gars. No, my good friends, I have not betrayed him.”

“Very good, that will do, cousin; you can explain all that to God in course of time.”

“But let me say good-by to Barbette.”

“Come,” said Marche-à-Terre, “if you don’t want us to think you worse than you are, behave like a Breton and be done with it.”

The two Chouans seized him again and threw him on the bench where he gave no other sign of resistance than the instinctive and convulsive motions of an animal, uttering a few smothered groans, which ceased when the axe fell. The head was off at the first blow. Marche-à-Terre took it by the hair, left the room, sought and found a large nail in the rough casing of the door, and wound the hair about it; leaving the bloody head, the eyes of which he did not even close, to hang there.

The two Chouans then washed their hands, without the least haste, in a pot full of water, picked up their hats and guns and jumped the gate, whistling the "Ballad of the Captain." Pille-Miche began to sing in a hoarse voice as he reached the field the last verses of that rustic song, their melody floating on the breeze :—

" At the first town
Her lover dressed her
All in white satin ;

" At the next town
Her lover dressed her
In gold and silver.

" So beautiful was she
They gave her veils
To wear in the regiment."

The tune became gradually indistinguishable as the Chouans got further away ; but the silence of the country was so great that several of the notes reached Bar-bette's ear as she neared home, holding her boy by the hand. A peasant-woman never listens coldly to that song, so popular is it in the West of France, and Bar-bette began, unconsciously, to sing the first verses :—

" Come, let us go, my girl,
Let us go to the war ;
Let us go, it is time.

" Brave captain,
Let it not trouble you,
But my daughter is not for you.

“You shall not have her on earth,
You shall not have her at sea,
Unless by treachery.

“The father took his daughter,
He unclothed her
And flung her out to sea.

“The captain, wiser still,
Into the waves he jumped
And to the shore he brought her.

“Come, let us go, my girl,
Let us go to the war ;
Let us go, it is time.

“At the first town
Her lover dressed her,”
Etc., etc.

As Barbette reached this verse of the song, where Pille-Miche had begun it, she was entering the courtyard of her home ; her tongue suddenly stiffened, she stood still, and a great cry, quickly repressed, came from her gaping lips.

“What is it, mother?” said the child.

“Walk alone,” she cried, pulling her hand away and pushing him roughly ; “you have neither father nor mother.”

The child, who was rubbing his shoulder and weeping, suddenly caught sight of the thing on the nail ; his childlike face kept the nervous convulsion his crying had caused, but he was silent. He opened his eyes wide, and gazed at the head of his father with a stupid look which betrayed no emotion ; then his face, brutal-

ized by ignorance, showed savage curiosity. Barbette again took his hand, grasped it violently, and dragged him into the house. When Pille-Miche and Marche-à-Terre threw their victim on the bench one of his shoes, dropping off, fell on the floor beneath his neck and was afterward filled with blood. It was the first thing that met the widow's eye.

"Take off your shoe," said the mother to her son. "Put your foot in that. Good. Remember," she cried, in a solemn voice, "your father's shoe; never put on your own without remembering how the Chouans filled it with his blood, and *kill the Chouans!*"

She swayed her head with so convulsive an action that the meshes of her black hair fell upon her neck and gave a sinister expression to her face.

"I call Saint-Labre to witness," she said, "that I vow you to the Blues. You shall be a soldier to avenge your father. Kill, kill the *Chouans*, and do as I do. Ha! they've taken the head of my man, and I am going to give that of the Gars to the Blues."

She sprang at a bound on the bed, seized a little bag of money from a hiding-place, took the hand of the astonished little boy, and dragged him after her without giving him time to put on his shoe, and was on her way to Fougères rapidly, without once turning her head to look at the home she abandoned. When they reached the summit of the rocks of Saint-Sulpice Barbette set fire to the pile of fagots, and the boy helped her to pile on the green gorse, damp with hoarfrost, to make the smoke more dense.

"That fire will last longer than your father, longer than I, longer than the Gars," said Barbette, in a savage voice.

While the widow of Galope-Chopine and her son with his bloody foot stood watching, the one, with a gloomy expression of revenge, the other with curiosity, the curling of the smoke, Mademoiselle de Verneuil's eyes were fastened on the same rock, trying, but in vain, to see her lover's signal. The fog, which had thickened, buried the whole region under a veil, its gray tints obscuring even the outlines of the scenery that was nearest the town. She examined with tender anxiety the rocks, the castle, the buildings, which loomed like shadows through the mist. Near her window several trees stood out against this blue-gray background; the sun gave a dull tone as of tarnished silver to the sky; its rays colored the bare branches of the trees, where a few last leaves were fluttering, with a dingy red. But too many dear and delightful sentiments filled Marie's soul to let her notice the ill-omens of a scene so out of harmony with the joys she was tasting in advance. For the last two days her ideas had undergone a change. The fierce, undisciplined vehemence of her passions had yielded under the influence of the equable atmosphere which a true love gives to life. The certainty of being loved, sought through so many perils, had given birth to a desire to re-enter those social conditions which sanction love, and which despair alone had made her leave. To love for a moment only now seemed to her a species of weakness. She saw herself lifted from the dregs of society, where misfortune had driven her, to the high rank in which her father had meant to place her. Her vanity, repressed for a time by the cruel alternations of hope and misconception, was awakened and showed her all the benefits of a great position. Born in a certain way to rank, marriage to a marquis

meant, to her mind, living and acting in the sphere that belonged to her. Having known the chances and changes of an adventurous life, she could appreciate, better than other women, the grandeur of the feelings which make the Family. Marriage and motherhood with all their cares seemed to her less a task than a rest. She loved the calm and virtuous life she saw through the clouds of this last storm as a woman weary of virtue may sometimes covet an illicit passion. Virtue was to her a new seduction.

"Perhaps," she thought, leaving the window without seeing the signal on the rocks of Saint-Sulpice, "I have been too coquettish with him — but I knew he loved me! Francine, it is not a dream; to-night I shall be Marquise de Montauran. What have I done to deserve such perfect happiness? Oh! I love him, and love alone is love's reward. And yet, I think God means to recompense me for taking heart through all my misery; he means me to forget my sufferings — for you know, Francine, I have suffered."

"To-night, Marquise de Montauran, you, Marie? Ah! until it is done I cannot believe it! Who has told him your true goodness?"

"Dear child! he has more than his handsome eyes to see me with, he has a soul. If you had seen him, as I have, in danger! Oh! he knows how to love — he is so brave!"

"If you really love him why do you let him come to Fougères?"

"We had no time to say one word to each other when the Blues surprised us. Besides, his coming is a proof of love. Can I ever have proofs enough? And now, Francine, do my hair."

But she pulled it down a score of times with motions that seemed electric, as though some stormy thoughts were mingling still with the arts of her coquetry. As she rolled a curl or smoothed the shining plaits she asked herself, with a remnant of distrust, whether the marquis were deceiving her; but treachery seemed to her impossible, for did he not expose himself to instant vengeance by entering Fougères? While studying in her mirror the effects of a sidelong glance, a smile, a gentle frown, an attitude of anger, or of love, or disdain, she was seeking some woman's wile by which to probe to the last instant the heart of the young leader.

"You are right, Francine," she said; "I wish with you that the marriage were over. This is the last of my cloudy days—it is big with death or happiness. Oh! that fog is dreadful," she went on, again looking towards the heights of Saint-Sulpice, which were still veiled in mist.

She began to arrange the silk and muslin curtains which draped the window, making them intercept the light and produce in the room a voluptuous chiaro-scuro.

"Francine," she said, "take away those knick-knacks on the mantelpiece; leave only the clock and the two Dresden vases. I'll fill those vases myself with the flowers Corentin brought me. Take out the chairs, I want only this sofa and a fauteuil. Then sweep the carpet, so as to bring out the colors, and put wax candles in the sconces and on the mantel."

Marie looked long and carefully at the old tapestry on the walls. Guided by her innate taste she found among the brilliant tints of these hangings the shades by which to connect their antique beauty with the furniture and accessories of the boudoir, either by the har-

mony of color or the charm of contrast. The same thought guided the arrangement of the flowers with which she filled the twisted vases which decorated her chamber. The sofa was placed beside the fire. On either side of the bed, which filled the space parallel to that of the chimney, she placed on gilded tables tall Dresden vases filled with foliage and flowers that were sweetly fragrant. She quivered more than once as she arranged the folds of the green damask above the bed, and studied the fall of the drapery which concealed it. Such preparations have a secret, ineffable happiness about them; they cause so many delightful emotions that a woman as she makes them forgets her doubts; and Mademoiselle de Verneuil forgot hers. There is in truth a religious sentiment in the multiplicity of cares taken for one beloved who is not there to see them and reward them, but who will reward them later with the approving smile these tender preparations (always so fully understood) obtain. Women, as they make them, love in advance; and there are few indeed who would not say to themselves, as Mademoiselle de Verneuil now thought: "To-night I shall be happy!" That soft hope lies in every fold of the silk or muslin; insensibly, the harmony the woman makes about her gives an atmosphere of love in which she breathes; to her these things are beings, witnesses; she has made them the sharers of her coming joy. Every movement, every thought brings that joy within her grasp. But presently she expects no longer, she hopes no more, she questions silence; the slightest sound is to her an omen; doubt hooks its claws once more into her heart; she burns, she trembles, she is grasped by a thought which holds her like a physical force; she alternates

from triumph to agony, and without the hope of coming happiness she could not endure the torture. A score of times did Mademoiselle de Verneuil raise the window-curtain, hoping to see the smoke rising above the rocks; but the fog only took a grayer tone, which her excited imagination turned into a warning. At last she let fall the curtain, impatiently resolving not to raise it again. She looked gloomily around the charming room to which she had given a soul and a voice, asking herself if it were done in vain, and this thought brought her back to her preparations.

"Francine," she said, drawing her into a little dressing-room which adjoined her chamber and was lighted through a small round window opening on a dark corner of the fortifications where they joined the rock terrace of the Promenade, "put everything in order. As for the salon, you can leave that as it is," she added, with a smile which women reserve for their nearest friends, the delicate sentiment of which men seldom understand.

"Ah! how sweet you are!" exclaimed the little maid.

"A lover is our beauty — foolish women that we are!" she replied gayly.

Francine left her lying on the ottoman, and went away convinced that, whether her mistress were loved or not, she would never betray Montauran.

"Are you sure of what you are telling me, old woman?" Hulot was saying to Barbette, who had sought him out as soon as she reached Fougères.

"Have you got eyes? Look at the rocks of Saint-Sulpice, there, my good man, to the right of Saint-Léonard."

Corentin, who was with Hulot, looked towards the

summit in the direction pointed out by Barbette, and, as the fog was beginning to lift, he could see with some distinctness the column of white smoke the woman told of.

"But when is he coming, old woman? — to-night, or this evening?"

"My good man," said Barbette, "I don't know."

"Why do you betray your own side?" said Hulot, quickly, having drawn her out of hearing of Corentin.

"Ah! general, see my boy's foot — that's washed in the blood of my man, whom the Chouans have killed like a calf, to punish him for the few words you got out of me the other day when I was working in the fields. Take my boy, for you've deprived him of his father and his mother; make a Blue of him, my good man, teach him to kill Chouans. Here, there's two hundred crowns, — keep them for him; if he is careful, they'll last him long, for it took his father twelve years to lay them by."

Hulot looked with amazement at the pale and withered woman, whose eyes were dry.

"But you, mother," he said, "what will become of you? you had better keep the money."

"I?" she replied, shaking her head sadly. "I don't need anything in this world. You might bolt me into that highest tower over there" (pointing to the battlements of the castle) "and the Chouans would contrive to come and kill me."

She kissed her boy with an awful expression of grief, looked at him, wiped away her tears, looked at him again, and disappeared.

"Commandant," said Corentin, "this is an occasion when two heads are better than one. We know all, and

yet we know nothing. If you surround Mademoiselle de Verneuil's house now, you will only warn her. Neither you, nor I, nor your Blues and your battalions are strong enough to get the better of that girl if she takes it into her head to save the *ci-devant*. The fellow is brave, and consequently wily; he is a young man full of daring. We can never get hold of him as he enters Fougères. Perhaps he is here already. Domiciliary visit? Absurdity! that's no good, it will only give them warning."

"Well," said Hulot, impatiently, "I shall tell the sentry on the Place Saint-Léonard to keep his eye on the house, and pass word along the other sentinels, if a young man enters it; as soon as the signal reaches me I shall take a corporal and four men and —"

"— and," said Corentin, interrupting the old soldier, "if the young man is not the marquis, or if the marquis does n't go in by the front door, or if he is already there, if — if — if — what then?"

Corentin looked at the commandant with so insulting an air of superiority that the old soldier shouted out: "God's thousand thunders! get out of here, citizen of hell! What have I got to do with your intrigues? If that cockchafer buzzes into my guard-room I shall shoot him; if I hear he is in a house I shall surround that house and take him when he leaves it and shoot him, but may the devil get me if I soil my uniform with any of your tricks."

"Commandant, the order of the ministers states that you are to obey Mademoiselle de Verneuil."

"Let her come and give them to me herself and I'll see about it."

"Well, citizen," said Corentin, haughtily, "she shall

come. She shall tell you herself the hour at which she expects the *ci-devant*. Possibly she won't be easy till you do post the sentinels round the house."

"The devil is made man," thought the old leader as he watched Corentin hurrying up the Queen's Staircase at the foot of which this scene had taken place. "He means to deliver Montauran bound hand and foot, with no chance to fight for his life, and I shall be harassed to death with a court-martial. However," he added, shrugging his shoulders, "the Gars certainly is an enemy of the Republic, and he killed my poor Gérard, and his death will make a noble the less — the devil take him!"

He turned on the heels of his boots and went off, whistling the Marseillaise, to inspect his guardrooms.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil was absorbed in one of those meditations the mysteries of which are buried in the soul, and prove by their thousand contradictory emotions, to the woman who undergoes them, that it is possible to have a stormy and passionate existence between four walls without even moving from the ottoman on which her very life is burning itself away. She had reached the final scene of the drama she had come to enact, and her mind was going over and over the phases of love and anger which had so powerfully stirred her life during the ten days which had now elapsed since her first meeting with the marquis. A man's step suddenly sounded in the adjoining room and she trembled; the door opened, she turned quickly and saw Corentin.

"You little cheat!" said the police-agent, "when will you stop deceiving? Ah, Marie, Marie, you are

playing a dangerous game by not taking me into your confidence. Why do you play such tricks without consulting me? If the marquis escapes his fate — ”

“ It won’t be your fault, will it? ” she replied, sarcastically. “ Monsieur,” she continued, in a grave voice, “ by what right do you come into my house? ”

“ Your house? ” he exclaimed.

“ You remind me,” she answered, coldly, “ that I have no home. Perhaps you chose this house deliberately for the purpose of committing murder. I shall leave it. I would live in a desert to get away from — ”

“ Spies, say the word,” interrupted Corentin. “ But this house is neither yours nor mine, it belongs to the government; and as for leaving it you will do nothing of the kind,” he added, giving her a diabolical look.

Mademoiselle de Verneuil rose indignantly, made a few steps to leave the room, but stopped short suddenly as Corentin raised the curtain of the window and beckoned her, with a smile, to come to him.

“ Do you see that column of smoke? ” he asked, with the calmness he always kept on his livid face, however intense his feelings might be.

“ What has my departure to do with that burning brush? ” she asked.

“ Why does your voice tremble? ” he said. “ You poor thing! ” he added, in a gentle voice, “ I know all. The marquis is coming to Fougères this evening; and it is not with any intention of delivering him to us that you have arranged this boudoir and the flowers and candles.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil turned pale, for she saw her lover’s death in the eyes of this tiger with a human face, and her love for him rose to frenzy. Each hair

on her head caused her an acute pain she could not endure, and she fell on the ottoman. Corentin stood looking at her for a moment with his arms folded, half pleased at inflicting a torture which avenged him for the contempt and the sarcasms this woman had heaped upon his head, half grieved by the sufferings of a creature whose yoke was pleasant to him, heavy as it was.

"She loves him!" he muttered.

"Love him!" she cried. "Ah! what are words? Corentin! he is my life, my soul, my breath!" She flung herself at the feet of the man, whose silence terrified her. "Soul of vileness!" she cried, "I would rather degrade myself to save his life than degrade myself by betraying him. I will save him at the cost of my own blood. Speak, what price must I pay you?"

Corentin quivered.

"I came to take your orders, Marie," he said, raising her. "Yes, Marie, your insults will not hinder my devotion to your wishes, provided you will promise not to deceive me again; you must know by this time that no one dupes me with impunity."

"If you want me to love you, Corentin, help me to save him."

"At what hour is he coming?" asked the spy, endeavoring to ask the question calmly.

"Alas, I do not know."

They looked at each other in silence.

"I am lost!" thought Mademoiselle de Verneuil.

"She is deceiving me!" thought Corentin. "Marie," he continued, "I have two maxims. One is never to believe a single word a woman says to me — that's the only means of not being duped; the other is to find what interest she has in doing the opposite of what she says,

and behaving in contradiction to the facts she pretends to confide to me. I think that you and I understand each other now."

"Perfectly," replied Mademoiselle de Verneuil. "You want proofs of my good faith; but I reserve them for the time when you give me some of yours."

"Adieu, mademoiselle," said Corentin, coolly.

"Nonsense," said the girl, smiling; "sit down, and pray don't sulk; but if you do I shall know how to save the marquis without you. As for the three hundred thousand francs which are always spread before your eyes, I will give them to you in good gold as soon as the marquis is safe."

Corentin rose, stepped back a pace or two, and looked at Marie.

"You have grown rich in a very short time," he said, in a tone of ill-disguised bitterness.

"Montauran," she continued, "will make you a better offer still for his ransom. Now, then, prove to me that you have the means of guaranteeing him from all danger and —"

"Can't you send him away the moment he arrives?" cried Corentin, suddenly. "Hulot does not know he is coming, and —" He stopped as if he had said too much. "But how absurd that you should ask me how to play a trick," he said, with an easy laugh. "Now listen, Marie, I do feel certain of your loyalty. Promise me a compensation for all I lose in furthering your wishes, and I will make that old fool of a commandant so unsuspicious that the marquis will be as safe at Fougères as at Saint-James."

"Yes, I promise it," said the girl, with a sort of solemnity.

“No, not in that way,” he said, “swear it by your mother.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil shuddered; raising a trembling hand she made the oath required by the man whose tone to her had changed so suddenly.

“You can command me,” he said; “don’t deceive me again, and you shall have reason to bless me to-night.”

“I will trust you, Corentin,” cried Mademoiselle de Verneuil, much moved. She bowed her head gently towards him and smiled with a kindness not unmingled with surprise, as she saw an expression of melancholy tenderness on his face.

“What an enchanting creature!” thought Corentin, as he left the house. “Shall I ever get her as a means to fortune and a source of delight? To fling herself at my feet! Oh, yes, the marquis shall die! If I can’t get that woman in any other way than by dragging her through the mud, I’ll sink her in it. At any rate,” he thought, as he reached the square unconscious of his steps, “she no longer distrusts me. Three hundred thousand francs down! she thinks me grasping! Either the offer was a trick or she is already married to him.”

Corentin, buried in thought, was unable to come to a resolution. The fog which the sun had dispersed at mid-day was now rolling thicker and thicker, so that he could hardly see the trees at a little distance.

“That’s another piece of ill-luck,” he muttered, as he turned slowly homeward. “It is impossible to see ten feet. The weather protects the lovers. How is one to watch a house in such a fog? Who goes there?” he cried, catching the arm of a boy who seemed to have clambered up the dangerous rocks which made the terrace of the Promenade.

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"It is I," said a childish voice.

"Ah! the boy with the bloody foot. Do you want to revenge your father?" said Corentin.

"Yes," said the child.

"Very good. Do you know the Gars?"

"Yes."

"Good again. Now, don't leave me except to do what I bid you, and you will obey your mother and earn some big sous — do you like sous?"

"Yes."

"You like sous, and you want to kill the Gars who killed your father — well, I'll take care of you. Ah! Marie," he muttered, after a pause, "you yourself shall betray him, as you engaged to do! She is too violent to suspect me — passion never reflects. She does not know the marquis's writing. Yes, I can set a trap into which her nature will drive her headlong. But I must first see Hulot."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil and Francine were deliberating on the means of saving the marquis from the more than doubtful generosity of Corentin and Hulot's bayonets.

"I could go and warn him," said the Breton girl.

"But we don't know where he is," replied Marie; "even I, with the instincts of love, could never find him."

After making and rejecting a number of plans Mademoiselle de Verneuil exclaimed, "When I see him his danger will inspire me."

She thought, like other ardent souls, to act on the spur of the moment, trusting to her star, or to that instinct of adroitness which rarely, if ever, fails a woman. Perhaps her heart was never so wrung. At times she

seemed stupefied, her eyes were fixed, and then, at the least noise, she shook like a half-uprooted tree which the woodman drags with a rope to hasten its fall. Suddenly, a loud report from a dozen guns echoed from a distance. Marie turned pale and grasped Francine's hand. "I am dying," she cried; "they have killed him!"

The heavy footfall of a man was heard in the antechamber. Francine went out and returned with a corporal. The man, making a military salute to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, produced some letters, the covers of which were a good deal soiled. Receiving no acknowledgment, the Blue said as he withdrew, "Madame, they are from the commandant."

Mademoiselle de Verneuil, a prey to horrible presentiments, read a letter written apparently in great haste by Hulot:—

"Mademoiselle — a party of my men have just caught a messenger from the Gars and have shot him. Among the intercepted letters is one which may be useful to you and I transmit it — etc."

"Thank God, it was not he they shot," she exclaimed, flinging the letter into the fire.

She breathed more freely and took up the other letter, inclosed by Hulot. It was apparently written to Madame du Gua by the marquis.

"No, my angel," the letter said, "I cannot go to-night to La Vivetière. You must lose your wager with the count. I triumph over the Republic in the person of their beautiful emissary. You must allow that she is worth the sacrifice of one night. It will be my only victory in this campaign, for I have received the news that La Vendée surrenders. I can do nothing more in

France. Let us go back to England — but we will talk of all this to-morrow.”

The letter fell from Marie’s hands; she closed her eyes, and was silent, leaning backward, with her head on a cushion. After a long pause she looked at the clock, which then marked four in the afternoon.

“My lord keeps me waiting,” she said, with savage irony.

“Oh! God grant he may not come!” cried Francine.

“If he does not come,” said Marie, in a stifled tone. “I shall go to him. No, no, he will soon be here. Francine, do I look well?”

“You are very pale.”

“Ah!” continued Mademoiselle de Verneuil, glancing about her, “this perfumed room, the flowers, the lights, this intoxicating air, it is full of that celestial life of which I dreamed —”

“Marie, what has happened?”

“I am betrayed, deceived, insulted, fooled! I will kill him, I will tear him bit by bit! Yes, there was always in his manner a contempt he could not hide and which I would not see. Oh! I shall die of this! Fool that I am,” she went on laughing, “he is coming; I have one night in which to teach him that, married or not, the man who has possessed me cannot abandon me. I will measure my vengeance by his offence; he shall die with despair in his soul. I did believe he had a soul of honor, but no! it is that of a lackey. Ah, he has cleverly deceived me, for even now it seems impossible that the man who abandoned me to Pille-Miche should sink to such back-stair tricks. It is so base to deceive a loving woman, for it is so easy. He might have killed me if he chose, but lie to me! to me, who

held him in my thoughts so high! The scaffold! the scaffold! ah! could I only see him guillotined! Am I cruel? He shall go to his death covered with caresses, with kisses which might have blessed him for a lifetime — ”

“ Marie,” said Francine, gently, “ be the victim of your lover like other women ; not his mistress and his betrayer. Keep his memory in your heart ; do not make it an anguish to you. If there were no joys in hopeless love, what would become of us, poor women that we are? God, of whom you never think, Marie, will reward us for obeying our vocation on this earth, — to love, and suffer.”

“ Dear,” replied Mademoiselle de Verneuil, taking Francine’s hand and patting it, “ your voice is very sweet and persuasive. Reason is attractive from your lips. I should like to obey you, but — ”

“ You will forgive him, you will not betray him? ”

“ Hush ! never speak of that man again. Compared with him Corentin is a noble being. Do you hear me? ”

She rose, hiding beneath a face that was horribly calm the madness of her soul and a thirst for vengeance. The slow and measured step with which she left the room conveyed the sense of an irrevocable resolution. Lost in thought, hugging her insults, too proud to show the slightest suffering, she went to the guardroom at the Porte Saint-Léonard and asked where the commandant lived. She had hardly left her house when Corentin entered it.

“ Oh, Monsieur Corentin,” cried Francine, “ if you are interested in this young man, save him ; Mademoiselle has gone to give him up because of this wretched letter.”

Corentin took the letter carelessly and asked, —

“Which way did she go?”

“I don’t know.”

“Yes,” he said, “I will save her from her own despair.”

He disappeared, taking the letter with him. When he reached the street he said to Galope-Chopine’s boy, whom he had stationed to watch the door, “Which way did a lady go who left the house just now?”

The boy went with him a little way and showed him the steep street which led to the *Porte Saint-Léonard*.

“That way,” he said.

At this moment four men entered *Mademoiselle de Verneuil*’s house, unseen by either the boy or Corentin.

“Return to your watch,” said the latter. “Play with the handles of the blinds and see what you can inside; look about you everywhere, even on the roof.”

Corentin darted rapidly in the direction given him, and thought he recognized *Mademoiselle de Verneuil* through the fog; he did, in fact, overtake her just as she reached the guard-house.

“Where are you going?” he said; “you are pale — what has happened? Is it right for you to be out alone? Take my arm.”

“Where is the commandant?” she asked.

Hardly had the words left her lips when she heard the movement of troops beyond the *Porte Saint-Léonard* and distinguished *Hulot*’s gruff voice in the tumult.

“God’s thunder!” he cried, “I never saw such fog as this for a reconnaissance! The Gars must have ordered the weather.”

“What are you complaining of?” said *Mademoiselle de Verneuil*, grasping his arm. “The fog will cover

vengeance as well as perfidy. Commandant," she added, in a low voice, "you must take measures at once so that the Gars may not escape us."

"Is he at your house?" he asked, in a tone which showed his amazement.

"Not yet," she replied; "but give me a safe man and I will send him to you when the marquis comes."

"That's a mistake," said Corentin; "a soldier will alarm him, but a boy, and I can find one, will not."

"Commandant," said Mademoiselle de Verneuil, "thanks to this fog which you are cursing, you can surround my house. Put soldiers everywhere. Place a guard in the church to command the esplanade on which the windows of my salon open. Post men on the Promenade; for though the windows of my bedroom are twenty feet above the ground, despair does sometimes give a man the power to jump even greater distances safely. Listen to what I say. I shall probably send this gentleman out of the door of my house; therefore see that only brave men are there to meet him; for," she added, with a sigh, "no one denies him courage; he will assuredly defend himself."

"Gudin!" called the commandant. "Listen, my lad," he continued in a low voice when the young man joined him, "this devil of a girl is betraying the Gars to us—I am sure I don't know why, but that's no matter. Take ten men and place yourself so as to hold the cul-de-sac in which the house stands; be careful that no one sees either you or your men."

"Yes, commandant, I know the ground."

"Very good," said Hulot. "I'll send Beau-Pied to let you know when to play your sabres. Try to meet

the marquis yourself, and if you can manage to kill him, so that I sha'n't have to shoot him judicially, you shall be a lieutenant in a fortnight or my name's not Hulot."

Gudin departed with a dozen soldiers.

"Do you know what you have done?" said Corentin to Mademoiselle de Verneuil, in a low voice.

She made no answer, but looked with a sort of satisfaction at the men who were starting, under command of the sub-lieutenant, for the Promenade, while others, following the next orders given by Hulot, were to post themselves in the shadows of the church of Saint-Léonard.

"There are houses adjoining mine," she said; "you had better surround them all. Don't lay up regrets by neglecting a single precaution."

"She is mad," thought Hulot.

"Was I not a prophet?" asked Corentin in his ear. "As for the boy I shall send with her, he is the little gars with a bloody foot; therefore —"

He did not finish his sentence, for Mademoiselle de Verneuil by a sudden movement darted in the direction of her house, whither he followed her, whistling like a man supremely satisfied. When he overtook her she was already at the door of her house, where Galopé, Chopine's little boy was on the watch.

"Mademoiselle," said Corentin, "take the lad with you; you cannot have a more innocent or active emissary. Boy," he added, "when you have seen the Gars enter the house come to me, no matter who stops you; you'll find me at the guard-house and I'll give you something that will make you eat cake for the rest of your days."

At these words, breathed rather than said in the child's ear, Corentin felt his hand squeezed by that of the little Breton, who followed Mademoiselle de Verneuil into the house.

"Now, my good friends, you can come to an explanation as soon as you like," cried Corentin when the door was closed. "If you make love, my little marquis, it will be on your winding-sheet."

But Corentin could not bring himself to let that fatal house completely out of sight, and he went to the Promenade, where he found the commandant giving his last orders. By this time it was night. Two hours went by; but the sentinels posted at intervals noticed nothing that led them to suppose the marquis had evaded the triple line of men who surrounded the three sides by which the tower of Papegaut was accessible. Twenty times had Corentin gone from the Promenade to the guard-house, always to find that his little emissary had not appeared. Sunk in thought, the spy paced the Promenade slowly, enduring the martyrdom to which three passions, terrible in their clashing, subject a man, — love, avarice, and ambition. Eight o'clock struck from all the towers in the town. The moon rose late. Fog and darkness wrapped in impenetrable gloom the places where the drama planned by this man was coming to its climax. He was able to silence the struggle of his passions as he walked up and down, his arms crossed, and his eyes fixed on the windows which rose like the luminous eyes of a phantom above the rampart. The deep silence was broken only by the rippling of the Nançon, by the regular and lugubrious tolling from the belfries, by the heavy steps of the sentinels or the rattle of arms as the guard was hourly relieved.

"The night's as black as a wolf's jaw," said the voice of Pille-Miche.

"Go on," growled Marche-à-Terre, "and don't talk more than a dead dog."

"I'm hardly breathing," said the Chouan.

"If the man who made that stone roll down wants his heart to serve as the scabbard for my knife he'll do it again," said Marche-à-Terre, in a low voice scarcely heard above the flowing of the river.

"It was I," said Pille-Miche.

"Well, then, old money-bag, down on your stomach," said the other, "and wriggle like a snake through a hedge, or we shall leave our carcasses behind us sooner than we need."

"Hey, Marche-à-Terre," said the incorrigible Pille-Miche, who was using his hands to drag himself along on his stomach, and had reached the level of his comrade's ear. "If the Grande-Garce is to be believed there'll be a fine booty to-day. Will you go shares with me?"

"Look here, Pille-Miche," said Marche-à-Terre stopping short on the flat of his stomach. The other Chouans, who were accompanying the two men, did the same, so wearied were they with the difficulties they had met with in climbing the precipice. "I know you," continued Marche-à-Terre, "for a Jack Grab-All who would rather give blows than receive them when there's nothing else to be done. We have not come here to grab dead men's shoes; we are devils against devils, and sorrow to those whose claws are too short. The Grande-Garce has sent us here to save the Gars. He is up there; lift your dog's nose and see that window above the tower."

Midnight was striking. The moon rose, giving the appearance of white smoke to the fog. Pille-Miche squeezed Marche-à-Terre's arm and silently showed him on the terrace just above them, the triangular iron of several shining bayonets.

"The Blues are there already," said Pille-Miche; "we sha'n't gain anything by force."

"Patience," replied Marche-à-Terre; "if I examined right this morning, we must be at the foot of the Papegaut tower between the ramparts and the Promenade, — that place where they put the manure; it is like a feather-bed to fall on."

"If Saint-Labre," remarked Pille-Miche, "would only change into cider the blood we shall shed to-night the citizens might lay in a good stock to-morrow."

Marche-à-Terre laid his large hand over his friend's mouth; then an order muttered by him went from rank to rank of the Chouans suspended as they were in mid-air among the brambles of the slate rocks. Corentin, walking up and down the esplanade had too practised an ear not to hear the rustling of the shrubs and the light sound of pebbles rolling down the sides of the precipice. Marche-à-Terre, who seemed to possess the gift of seeing in darkness, and whose senses, continually in action, were acute as those of a savage, saw Corentin; like a trained dog he had scented him. Fouché's diplomatist listened but heard nothing; he looked at the natural wall of rock and saw no signs. If the confusing gleam of the fog enabled him to see, here and there, a crouching Chouan, he took him, no doubt, for a fragment of rock, for these human bodies had all the appearance of inert nature. This danger to the invaders was of short duration. Corentin's attention was di-

verted by a very distinct noise coming from the other end of the Promenade, where the rock wall ended and a steep descent leading down to the Queen's Staircase began. When Corentin reached the spot he saw a figure gliding past it as if by magic. Putting out his hand to grasp this real or fantastic being, who was there, he supposed, with no good intentions, he encountered the soft and rounded figure of a woman.

"The devil take you!" he exclaimed, "if any one else had met you, you'd have had a ball through your head. What are you doing, and where are you going, at this time of night? Are you dumb? It certainly is a woman," he said to himself.

The silence was suspicious, but the stranger broke it by saying, in a voice which suggested extreme fright. "Ah, my good man, I'm on my way back from a wake."

"It is the pretended mother of the marquis," thought Corentin. "I'll see what she's about. Well, go that way, old woman," he replied, feigning not to recognize her. "Keep to the left if you don't want to be shot."

He stood quite still; then observing that Madame du Gua was making for the Papegaut tower, he followed her at a distance with diabolical caution. During this fatal encounter the Chouans had posted themselves on the manure towards which Marche-à-Terre had guided them.

"There's the Grande-Garce!" thought Marche-à-Terre, as he rose to his feet against the tower wall like a bear.

"We are here," he said to her in a low voice.

"Good," she replied, "there's a ladder in the garden of that house about six feet above the manure; find it, and the Gars is saved. Do you see that small window

up there? It is in the dressing-room; you must get to it. This side of the tower is the only one not watched. The horses are ready; if you can hold the passage over the Nançon, a quarter of an hour will put him out of danger—in spite of his folly. But if that woman tries to follow him, stab her.”

Corentin now saw several of the forms he had hitherto supposed to be stones moving cautiously but swiftly. He went at once to the guardroom at the Porte Saint-Léonard, where he found the commandant fully dressed and sound asleep on a camp bed.

“Let him alone,” said Beau-Pied, roughly, “he has only just lain down.”

“The Chouans are here!” cried Corentin, in Hulot’s ear.

“Impossible! but so much the better,” cried the old soldier, still half asleep; “then he can fight.”

When Hulot reached the Promenade Corentin pointed out to him the singular position taken by the Chouans.

“They must have deceived or strangled the sentries I placed between the castle and the Queen’s Staircase. Ah! what a devil of a fog! However, patience! I’ll send a squad of men under a lieutenant to the foot of the rock. There is no use attacking them where they are, for those animals are so hard they’d let themselves roll down the precipice without breaking a limb.”

The cracked clock of the belfry was ringing two when the commandant got back to the Promenade after giving these orders and taking every military precaution to seize the Chouans. The sentries were doubled and Mademoiselle de Verneuil’s house became the centre of

a little army. Hulot found Corentin absorbed in contemplation of the window which overlooked the tower.

"Citizen," said the commandant, "I think the *citoyen* has fooled us; there's nothing stirring."

"He is there," cried Corentin, pointing to the window. "I have seen a man's shadow on the curtain. But I can't think what has become of that boy. They must have killed him or locked him up. There! commandant, don't you see that? there's a man's shadow; come, come on!"

"I sha'n't seize him in bed; thunder of God! He will come out if he went in; Gudrin won't miss him," cried Hulot, who had his own reasons for waiting till the Gars could defend himself.

"Commandant, I enjoin you, in the name of the law to proceed at once into that house."

"You're a fine scoundrel to try to make me do that."

Without showing any resentment at the commandant's language, Corentin said coolly: "You will obey me. Here is an order in good form, signed by the minister of war, which will force you to do so." He drew a paper from his pocket and held it out. "Do you suppose we are such fools as to leave that girl to do as she likes? We are endeavoring to suppress a civil war, and the grandeur of the purpose covers the pettiness of the means."

"I take the liberty, citizen, of sending you to—you understand me? Enough. To the right-about, march! Let me alone, or it will be the worse for you."

"But read that," persisted Corentin.

"Don't bother me with your functions," cried Hulot, furious at receiving orders from a man he regarded as contemptible.

At this instant Galope-Chopine's boy suddenly appeared among them like a rat from a hole.

"The Gars has started!" he cried.

"Which way?"

"The rue Saint-Léonard."

"Beau-Pied," said Hulot in a whisper to the corporal who was near him, "go and tell your lieutenant to draw in closer round the house, and make ready to fire. Left wheel, forward on the tower, the rest of you!" he shouted.

To understand the conclusion of this fatal drama we must re-enter the house with Mademoiselle de Verneuil when she returned to it after denouncing the marquis to the commandant.

When passions reach their crisis they bring us under the dominion of far greater intoxication than the petty excitements of wine or opium. The lucidity then given to ideas, the delicacy of the high-wrought senses, produce the most singular and unexpected effects. Some persons when they find themselves under the tyranny of a single thought can see with extraordinary distinctness objects scarcely visible to others, while at the same time the most palpable things become to them almost as if they did not exist. When Mademoiselle de Verneuil hurried, after reading the marquis's letter, to prepare the way for vengeance just as she had lately been preparing all for love, she was in that stage of mental intoxication which makes real life like the life of a somnambulist. But when she saw her house surrounded, by her own orders, with a triple line of bayonets a sudden flash of light illuminated her soul. She judged her conduct and saw with horror that she had committed a crime. Under the first shock of this con-

viction she sprang to the threshold of the door and stood there irresolute, striving to think, yet unable to follow out her reasoning. She knew so vaguely what had happened that she tried in vain to remember why she was in the antechamber, and why she was leading a strange child by the hand. A million of stars were floating in the air before her like tongues of fire. She began to walk about, striving to shake off the horrible torpor which laid hold of her; but, like one asleep, no object appeared to her under its natural form or in its own colors. She grasped the hand of the little boy with a violence not natural to her, dragging him along with such precipitate steps that she seemed to have the motions of a madwoman. She saw neither persons nor things in the salon as she crossed it, and yet she was saluted by three men who made way to let her pass.

“That must be she,” said one of them.

“She is very handsome,” exclaimed another, who was a priest.

“Yes,” replied the first; “but how pale and agitated—”

“And beside herself,” said the third; “she did not even see us.”

At the door of her own room Mademoiselle de Verneuil saw the smiling face of Francine, who whispered to her: “He is here, Marie.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil awoke, reflected, looked at the child whose hand she held, remembered all, and replied to the girl: “Shut up that boy; if you wish me to live do not let him escape you.”

As she slowly said the words her eyes were fixed on the door of her bedroom, and there they continued fastened with so dreadful a fixedness that it seemed as

if she saw her victim through the wooden panels. Then she gently opened it, passed through and closed it behind her without turning round, for she saw the marquis standing before the fireplace. His dress, without being too choice, had the look of careful arrangement which adds so much to the admiration which a woman feels for her lover. All her self-possession came back to her at the sight of him. Her lips, rigid, although half-open, showed the enamel of her white teeth and formed a smile that was fixed and terrible rather than voluptuous. She walked with slow steps toward the young man and pointed with her finger to the clock.

"A man who is worthy of love is worth waiting for," she said with deceptive gayety.

Then, overcome with the violence of her emotions, she dropped upon the sofa which was near the fireplace.

"Dear Marie, you are charming when you are angry," said the marquis, sitting down beside her and taking her hand, which she let him take, and entreating a look, which she refused him. "I hope," he continued, in a tender, caressing voice, "that my wife will not long refuse a glance to her loving husband."

Hearing the words she turned abruptly and looked into his eyes.

"What is the meaning of that dreadful look?" he said, laughing. "But your hand is burning! oh, my love, what is it?"

"Your love!" she repeated, in a dull, changed voice.

"Yes," he said, throwing himself on his knees beside her and taking her two hands which he covered with kisses. "Yes, my love — I am thine for life."

She pushed him violently away from her and rose. Her features contracted, she laughed as mad people

laugh, and then she said to him: "You do not mean one word of all you are saying, base man — baser than the lowest villain." She sprang to the dagger which was lying beside a flower-vase, and let it sparkle before the eyes of the amazed young marquis. "Bah!" she said, flinging it away from her, "I do not respect you enough to kill you. Your blood is even too vile to be shed by soldiers; I see nothing fit for you but the executioner."

The words were painfully uttered in a low voice, and she moved her feet like a spoilt child, impatiently. The marquis went to her and tried to clasp her.

"Don't touch me!" she cried, recoiling from him with a look of horror.

"She is mad!" said the marquis in despair.

"Mad, yes!" she repeated, "but not mad enough to be your dupe. What would I not forgive to passion? but to seek to possess me without love, and to write to that woman —"

"To whom have I written?" he said, with an astonishment which was certainly not feigned.

"To that chaste woman who sought to kill me."

The marquis turned pale with anger and said, grasping the back of a chair until he broke it, "If Madame du Gua has committed some dastardly wrong —"

Mademoiselle de Verneuil looked for the letter; not finding it she called to Francine.

"Where is that letter?" she asked.

"Monsieur Corentin took it."

"Corentin! ah! I understand it all; he wrote the letter; he has deceived me with diabolical art — as he alone can deceive."

With a piercing cry she flung herself on the sofa,

tears rushing from her eyes. Doubt and confidence were equally dreadful now. The marquis knelt beside her and clasped her to his breast, saying, again and again, the only words he was able to utter: —

“Why do you weep, my darling? there is no harm done; your reproaches were all love; do not weep, I love you — I shall always love you.”

Suddenly he felt her press him with almost supernatural force. “Do you still love me?” she said, amid her sobs.

“Can you doubt it?” he replied in a tone that was almost melancholy.

She abruptly disengaged herself from his arms, and fled, as if frightened and confused, to a little distance.

“Do I doubt it?” she exclaimed, but a smile of gentle meaning was on her lover’s face, and the words died away upon her lips; she let him take her by the hand and lead her to the salon. There an altar had been hastily arranged during her absence. The priest was robed in his officiating vestments. The lighted tapers shed upon the ceiling a glow as soft as hope itself. She now recognized the two men who had bowed to her, the Comte de Bauvan and the Baron du Guénic, the witnesses chosen by Montauran.

“You will not still refuse?” said the marquis.

But at the sight she stopped, stepped backward into her chamber and fell on her knees; raising her hands towards the marquis she cried out: “Pardon! pardon! pardon!”

Her voice died away, her head fell back, her eyes closed, and she lay in the arms of her lover and Frangine as if dead. When she opened her eyes they met those of the young man full of loving tenderness.

“Marie! patience! this is your last trial,” he said.

“The last!” she exclaimed, bitterly.

Francine and the marquis looked at each other in surprise, but she silenced them by a gesture.

“Call the priest,” she said, “and leave me alone with him.”

They did so, and withdrew.

“My father,” she said to the priest so suddenly called to her, “in my childhood, an old man, white-haired like yourself, used to tell me that God would grant all things to those who had faith. Is that true?”

“It is true,” replied the priest; “all things are possible to Him who created all.”

Mademoiselle de Verneuil threw herself on her knees before him with incredible enthusiasm.

“Oh, my God!” she cried in ecstasy, “my faith in thee is equal to my love for him; inspire me! do here a miracle, or take my life!”

“Your prayer will be granted,” said the priest.

Marie returned to the salon leaning on the arm of the venerable old man. A deep and secret emotion brought her to the arms of her lover more brilliant than on any of her past days, for a serenity like that which painters give to the martyrs added to her face an imposing dignity. She held out her hand to the marquis and together they advanced to the altar and knelt down. The marriage about to be celebrated beside the nuptial bed, the altar hastily raised, the cross, the vessels, the chalice, secretly brought thither by the priest, the fumes of incense rising to the ceiling, the priest himself, who wore a stole above his cassock, the tapers on an altar in a salon, — all these things combined to form a strange and touching scene, which typified those times

of saddest memory, when civil discord overthrew all sacred institutions. Religious ceremonies then had the savor of the mysteries. Children were baptized in the chambers where the mothers were still groaning from their labor. As in the olden time, the Saviour went, poor and lowly, to console the dying. Young girls received their first communion in the home where they had played since infancy. The marriage of the marquis and Mademoiselle de Verneuil was now solemnized, like many other unions, by a service contrary to the recent legal enactments. In after years these marriages, mostly celebrated at the foot of oaks, were scrupulously recognized and considered legal. The priest who thus preserved the ancient usages was one of those men who hold to their principles in the height of the storm. His voice, which never made the oath exacted by the Republic, uttered no word throughout the tempest that did not make for peace. He never incited, like the Abbé Gudin, to fire and sword; but like many others, he devoted himself to the still more dangerous mission of performing his priestly functions for the souls of faithful Catholics. To accomplish this perilous ministry he used all the pious deceptions necessitated by persecution, and the marquis, when he sought his services on this occasion, had found him in one of those excavated caverns which are known, even to the present day, by the name of "the priest's hiding-place." The mere sight of that pale and suffering face was enough to give this worldly room a holy aspect.

All was now ready for the act of misery and of joy. Before beginning the ceremony the priest asked, in the dead silence, the names of the bride.

"Marie-Nathalie, daughter of Mademoiselle Blanche

de Castéran, abbess, deceased, of Notre-Dame de Sééz, and Victor-Amédée, Duc de Verneuil."

"Where born?"

"At La Chasterie, near Alençon."

"I never supposed," said the baron in a low voice to the count, "that Montauran would have the folly to marry her. The natural daughter of a duke! — horrid!"

"If it were of the king, well and good," replied the Comte de Bauvan, smiling. "However, it is not for me to blame him; I like Charette's mistress full as well; and I shall transfer the war to her — though she's not one to bill and coo."

The names of the marquis had been filled in previously, and the two lovers now signed the document with their witnesses. The ceremony then began. At that instant Marie, and she alone, heard the sound of muskets and the heavy tread of soldiers, — no doubt relieving the guard in the church which she had herself demanded. She trembled violently and raised her eyes to the cross on the altar.

"A saint at last," said Francine, in a low voice.

"Give me such saints, and I'll be devilishly devout," added the count, in a whisper.

When the priest made the customary inquiry of Mademoiselle de Verneuil, she answered by a "yes" uttered with a deep sigh. Bending to her husband's ear she said: "You will soon know why I have broken the oath I made never to marry you."

After the ceremony all present passed into the dining-room, where dinner was served, and as they took their places Jérémie, Marie's footman, came into the room terrified. The poor bride rose and went to him; Francine followed her. With one of those pretexts which

never fail a woman, she begged the marquis to do the honors for a moment, and went out, taking Jérémie with her before he could utter the fatal words.

“Ah! Francine, to be dying a thousand deaths and not to die!” she cried.

This absence might well be supposed to have its cause in the ceremony that had just taken place. Towards the end of the dinner, as the marquis was beginning to feel uneasy, Marie returned in all the pomp of a bridal robe. Her face was calm and joyful, while that of Francine who followed her had terror imprinted on every feature, so that the guests might well have thought they saw in these two women a fantastic picture by Salvator Rosa, of Life and Death holding each other by the hand.

“Gentlemen,” said Marie to the priest, the baron, and the count, “you are my guests for the night. I find you cannot leave Fougères; it would be dangerous to attempt it. My good maid has instructions to make you comfortable in your apartments. No, you must not rebel,” she added to the priest, who was about to speak. “I hope you will not thwart a woman on her wedding-day.”

An hour later she was alone with her husband in the room she had so joyously arranged a few hours earlier. They had reached that fatal bed where, like a tomb, so many hopes are wrecked, where the waking to a happy life is all uncertain, where love is born or dies, according to the natures that are tried there. Marie looked at the clock. “Six hours to live,” she murmured.

“Can I have slept?” she cried towards morning, wakening with one of those sudden movements which rouse us when we have made ourselves a promise to

wake at a certain hour. "Yes, I have slept," she thought, seeing by the light of the candles that the hands of the clock were pointing to two in the morning. She turned and looked at the sleeping marquis, lying like a child with his head on one hand, the other clasping his wife's hand, his lips half smiling as though he had fallen asleep while she kissed him.

"Ah!" she whispered to herself, "he sleeps like an infant; he does not distrust me — me, to whom he has given a happiness without a name."

She touched him softly and he woke, continuing to smile. He kissed the hand he held and looked at the wretched woman with eyes so sparkling that she could not endure their light and slowly lowered her large eyelids. Her husband might justly have accused her of coquetry if she were not concealing the terrors of her soul by thus evading the fire of his looks. Together they raised their charming heads and made each other a sign of gratitude for the pleasures they had tasted; but after a rapid glance at the beautiful picture his wife presented, the marquis was struck with an expression on her face which seemed to him melancholy, and he said in a tender voice, "Why sad, dear love?"

"Poor Alphonse," she answered, "do you know to what I have led you?"

"To happiness."

"To death!"

Shuddering with horror she sprang from the bed; the marquis, astonished, followed her. His wife motioned him to a window and raised the curtain, pointing as she did so to a score of soldiers. The moon had scattered the fog and was now casting her white light on the muskets and the uniforms, on the impassible

Corentin pacing up and down like a jackal waiting for his prey, on the commandant standing still, his arms crossed, his nose in the air, his lips curling, watchful and displeased.

"Come, Marie, leave them and come back to me."

"Why do you smile? I placed them there."

"You are dreaming."

"No."

They looked at each other for a moment. The marquis divined the whole truth, and he took her in his arms. "No matter!" he said, "I love you still."

"All is not lost!" cried Marie, "it cannot be! Alphonse," she said after a pause, "there is hope."

At this moment they distinctly heard the owl's cry, and Francine entered from the dressing-room.

"Pierre has come!" she said with a joy that was like delirium.

The marquise and Francine dressed Montauran in Chouan clothes with that amazing rapidity that belongs only to women. As soon as Marie saw her husband loading the gun Francine had brought in she slipped hastily from the room with a sign to her faithful maid. Francine then took the marquis to the dressing-room adjoining the bed-chamber. The young man seeing a large number of sheets knotted firmly together, perceived the means by which the girl expected him to escape the vigilance of the soldiers.

"I can't get through there," he said, examining the bull's-eye window.

At that instant it was darkened by a thickset figure, and a hoarse voice, known to Francine, said in a whisper, "Make haste, general, those rascally Blues are stirring."

"Oh! one more kiss," said a trembling voice beside him.

The marquis, whose feet were already on the liberating ladder, though he was not wholly through the window, felt his neck clasped with a despairing pressure. Seeing that his wife had put on his clothes, he tried to detain her; but she tore herself roughly from his arms and he was forced to descend. In his hand he held a fragment of some stuff which the moonlight showed him was a piece of the waistcoat he had worn the night before.

"Halt! fire!"

These words uttered by Hulot in the midst of a silence that was almost horrible broke the spell which seemed to hold the men and their surroundings. A volley of balls coming from the valley and reaching to the foot of the tower succeeded the discharges of the Blues posted on the Promenade. The fire of the Republicans was unremitting. Not a cry came from the Chouans. Between each discharge the silence was frightful.

But Corentin had heard a fall from the ladder on the precipice side of the tower, and he suspected some ruse.

"None of those animals are growling," he said to Hulot; "our lovers are capable of fooling us on this side, and escaping themselves on the other."

The spy, to clear up the mystery, sent for torches; Hulot, understanding the force of Corentin's supposition, and hearing the noise of a serious struggle in the direction of the Porte Saint-Léonard, rushed to the guard-house exclaiming: "That's true, they won't separate."

"His head is well riddled, commandant," said Beau-Pied, who was the first to meet him, "but he killed

Gudin, and wounded two men. Ha! the savage; he got through three ranks of our best men and would have reached the fields if it had n't been for the sentry at the gate who spitted him on his bayonet."

The commandant rushed into the guard-room and saw on a camp bedstead a bloody body which had just been laid there. He went up to the supposed marquis, raised the hat which covered the face, and fell into a chair.

"I suspected it!" he cried, crossing his arms violently; "she kept him, cursed thunder! too long."

The soldiers stood about, motionless. The commandant himself unfastened the long black hair of a woman. Suddenly the silence was broken by the tramp of men and Corentin entered the guardroom, preceding four soldiers who bore on their guns, crossed to make a litter, the body of Montauran, who was shot in the thighs and arms. They laid him on the bedstead beside his wife. He saw her, and found strength to clasp her hand with a convulsive gesture. The dying woman turned her head, recognized her husband, and shuddered with a spasm that was horrible to see, murmuring in a voice almost extinct: "A day without a morrow! God heard me too well."

"Commandant," said the marquis, collecting all his strength, and still holding Marie's hand, "I count on your honor to send the news of my death to my young brother, who is now in London. Write him that if he wishes to obey my last injunction he will never bear arms against his country — neither must he abandon the king's service."

"It shall be done," said Hulot, pressing the hand of the dying man.

"Take them to the nearest hospital," cried Corentin.

Hulot took the spy by the arm with a grip that left the imprint of his fingers on the flesh.

"Out of this camp!" he cried; "your business is done here. Look well at the face of Commander Hulot, and never find yourself again in his way if you don't want your belly to be the scabbard of his blade —"

And the old soldier flourished his sabre.

"That's another of the honest men who will never make their way," said Corentin to himself when he was some distance from the guardroom.

The marquis was still able to thank his gallant adversary by a look marking the respect which all soldiers feel for loyal enemies.

In 1827 an old man accompanied by his wife was buying cattle in the market-place of Fougères. Few persons remembered that he had killed a hundred or more men, and that his former name was Marche-à-Terre. A person to whom we owe important information about all the personages of this drama saw him there, leading a cow, and was struck by his simple, ingenuous air, which led her to remark, "That must be a worthy man."

As for Cibot, otherwise called Pille-Miche, we already know his end. It is likely that Marche-à-Terre made some attempt to save his comrade from the scaffold; possibly he was in the square at Alençon on the occasion of the frightful tumult which was one of the events of the famous trial of Rifoël, Briond, and la Chanterie.

A PASSION IN THE DESERT.

A PASSION IN THE DESERT.

"THE sight was fearful!" she exclaimed, as we left the menagerie of Monsieur Martin.

She had been watching that daring speculator as he went through his wonderful performance in the den of the hyena.

"How is it possible," she continued, "to tame those animals so as to be certain that he can trust them?"

"You think it a problem," I answered, interrupting her, "and yet it is a natural fact."

"Oh!" she cried, an incredulous smile flickering on her lip.

"Do you think that beasts are devoid of passions?" I asked. "Let me assure you that we teach them all the vices and virtues of our own state of civilization."

She looked at me in amazement.

"The first time I saw Monsieur Martin," I added, "I exclaimed, as you do, with surprise. I happened to be sitting beside an old soldier whose right leg was amputated, and whose appearance had attracted my notice as I entered the building. His face, stamped with the scars of battle, wore the undaunted look of a veteran of the wars of Napoleon. Moreover, the old hero had a frank and joyous manner which attracts me wherever I meet it. He was, doubtless, one of those old campaigners whom nothing can surprise, who find something to laugh at in the last contortions of a comrade, and will bury a friend

or rifle his body gayly ; challenging bullets with indifference ; making short shrift for themselves or others ; and fraternizing, as a usual thing, with the devil. After looking very attentively at the proprietor of the menagerie as he entered the den, my companion curled his lip with that expression of satirical contempt which well-informed men sometimes put on to mark the difference between themselves and dupes. As I uttered my exclamation of surprise at the coolness and courage of Monsieur Martin, the old soldier smiled, shook his head, and said with a knowing glance, ‘An old story !’

“ ‘How do you mean, an old story?’ I asked. ‘If you could explain the secret of this mysterious power, I should be greatly obliged to you.’

“After a while, during which we became better acquainted, we went to dine at the first restaurant we could find after leaving the menagerie. A bottle of champagne with our dessert brightened the recollections of the old man and made them singularly vivid. He related to me a circumstance in his early history which proved that he had ample cause to pronounce Monsieur Martin’s performance ‘an old story.’”

When we reached her house, she was so persuasive and captivating, and made me so many pretty promises, that I consented to write down for her benefit the story told me by the old hero. On the following day I sent her this episode of an historical epic, which might be entitled, “The French in Egypt.”

At the time of General Desaix’s expedition to Upper Egypt a Provençal soldier, who had fallen into the hands

of the Maugrabins, was marched by those tireless Arabs across the desert which lies beyond the cataracts of the Nile. To put sufficient distance between themselves and the French army and thus insure their safety, the Maugrabins made a forced march, and did not halt until after nightfall. They then camped about a well shaded with palm-trees, near which they had previously buried a stock of provisions. Not dreaming that the thought of escape could enter their captive's mind, they merely bound his wrists, and lay down to sleep themselves, after eating a few dates and giving their horses a feed of barley. When the bold Provençal saw his enemies too soundly asleep to watch him, he used his teeth to pick up a scimitar, with which, steadying the blade by means of his knees, he contrived to cut through the cord which bound his hands, and thus recovered his liberty. He at once seized a carbine and a poniard, took the precaution to lay in a supply of dates, a small bag of barley, some powder and ball, buckled on the scimitar, mounted one of the horses, and spurred him in the direction where he supposed the French army to be. Impatient to meet the outposts, he pressed the horse, which was already wearied, so severely that the poor animal fell dead with his flanks torn, leaving the Frenchman alone in the midst of the desert.

After marching for a long time through the sand with the dogged courage of an escaping galley-slave, the soldier was forced to halt as the darkness drew on; for his utter weariness compelled him to rest, though the exquisite sky of an Eastern night might well have tempted him to continue the journey. Happily he had reached a slight elevation, at the top of which a few palm-trees

shot upward, whose leafage, seen from a long distance against the sky, had helped to sustain his hopes. His fatigue was so great that he threw himself down on a block of granite, cut by Nature into the shape of a camp-bed, and slept heavily, without taking the least precaution to protect himself while asleep. He accepted the loss of his life as inevitable, and his last waking thought was one of regret for having left the Maugrabins, whose nomad life began to charm him now that he was far away from them and from every other hope of succor.

He was wakened by the sun, whose pitiless beams falling vertically upon the granite rock produced an intolerable heat. The Provençal had ignorantly flung himself down in a contrary direction to the shadows thrown by the verdant and majestic fronds of the palm-trees. He gazed at these solitary monarchs and shuddered. They recalled to his mind the graceful shafts crowned with long weaving leaves which distinguish the Saracenic columns of the cathedral of Arles. The thought overcame him, and when, after counting the trees, he threw his eyes upon the scene around him, an agony of despair convulsed his soul. He saw a limitless ocean. The sombre sands of the desert stretched out till lost to sight in all directions; they glittered with dark lustre like a steel blade shining in the sun. He could not tell if it were an ocean or a chain of lakes that lay mirrored before him. A hot vapor swept in waves above the surface of this heaving continent. The sky had the Oriental glow of translucent purity which disappoints because it leaves nothing for the imagination to desire. The heavens and the earth were both on fire. Silence

added its awful and desolate majesty. Infinitude, immensity pressed down upon the soul on every side; not a cloud in the sky, not a breath in the air, not a rift on the breast of the sand, which was ruffled only with little ridges scarcely rising above its surface. Far as the eye could reach the horizon fell away into space, marked by a slender line, slim as the edge of a sabre, — like as in summer seas a thread of light parts this earth from the heaven it meets.

The Provençal clasped the trunk of a palm-tree as if it were the body of a friend. Sheltered from the sun by its straight and slender shadow, he wept; and presently sitting down he remained motionless, contemplating with awful dread the implacable nature stretched out before him. He cried aloud, as if to tempt the solitude to answer him. His voice, lost in the hollows of the hillock, sounded afar with a thin resonance that returned no echo; the echo came from the soldier's heart. He was twenty-two years old, and he loaded his carbine.

“Time enough!” he muttered, as he put the liberating weapon on the sand beneath him.

Gazing by turns at the burnished blackness of the sand and the blue expanse of the sky, the soldier dreamed of France. He smelt in fancy the gutters of Paris; he remembered the towns through which he had passed, the faces of his comrades, and the most trifling incidents of his life. His southern imagination saw the pebbles of his own Provence in the undulating play of the heated air, as it seemed to roughen the far-reaching surface of the desert. Dreading the dangers of this cruel mirage, he went down the little hill on the side

opposite to that by which he had gone up the night before. His joy was great when he discovered a natural grotto, formed by the immense blocks of granite which made a foundation for the rising ground. The remnants of a mat showed that the place had once been inhabited, and close to the entrance were a few palm-trees loaded with fruit. The instinct which binds men to life woke in his heart. He now hoped to live until some Maugrabbin should pass that way ; possibly he might even hear the roar of cannon, for Bonaparte was at that time overrunning Egypt. Encouraged by these thoughts, the Frenchman shook down a cluster of the ripe fruit under the weight of which the palms were bending ; and as he tasted this unhopèd-for manna, he thanked the former inhabitant of the grotto for the cultivation of the trees, which the rich and luscious flesh of the fruit amply attested. Like a true Provençal, he passed from the gloom of despair to a joy that was half insane. He ran back to the top of the hill, and busied himself for the rest of the day in cutting down one of the sterile trees which had been his shelter the night before.

Some vague recollection made him think of the wild beasts of the desert, and foreseeing that they would come to drink at a spring which bubbled through the sand at the foot of the rock, he resolved to protect his hermitage by felling a tree across the entrance. Notwithstanding his eagerness, and the strength which the fear of being attacked while asleep gave to his muscles, he was unable to cut the palm-tree in pieces during the day ; but he succeeded in bringing it down. Towards evening the king of the desert fell ; and the noise of his fall, echoing far, was like a moan from the breast of

Solitude. The soldier shuddered, as though he had heard a voice predicting evil. But, like an heir who does not long mourn a parent, he stripped from the beautiful tree the arching green fronds — its poetical adornment — and made a bed of them in his refuge. Then, tired with his work and by the heat of the day, he fell asleep beneath the red vault of the grotto.

In the middle of the night his sleep was broken by a strange noise. He sat up; the deep silence that reigned everywhere enabled him to hear the alternating rhythm of a respiration whose savage vigor could not belong to a human being. A terrible fear, increased by the darkness, by the silence, by the rush of his waking fancies, numbed his heart. He felt the contraction of his hair, which rose on end as his eyes, dilating to their full strength, beheld through the darkness two faint amber lights. At first he thought them an optical delusion; but by degrees the clearness of the night enabled him to distinguish objects in the grotto, and he saw, within two feet of him, an enormous animal lying at rest.

Was it a lion? Was it a tiger? Was it a crocodile? The Provençal had not enough education to know in what sub-species he ought to class the intruder; but his terror was all the greater because his ignorance made it vague. He endured the cruel trial of listening, of striving to catch the peculiarities of this breathing without losing one of its inflections, and without daring to make the slightest movement. A strong odor, like that exhaled by foxes, only far more pungent and penetrating, filled the grotto. When the soldier had tasted it, so to speak, by the nose, his fear became terror; he could no longer doubt the nature of the terrible companion whose

royal lair he had taken for a bivouac. Before long, the reflection of the moon, as it sank to the horizon, lighted up the den and gleamed upon the shining, spotted skin of a panther.

The lion of Egypt lay asleep, curled up like a dog, the peaceable possessor of a kennel at the gate of a mansion; its eyes, which had opened for a moment, were now closed; its head was turned towards the Frenchman. A hundred conflicting thoughts rushed through the mind of the panther's prisoner. Should he kill it with a shot from his musket? But ere the thought was formed, he saw there was no room to take aim; the muzzle would have gone beyond the animal. Suppose he were to wake it? The fear kept him motionless. As he heard the beating of his heart through the dead silence, he cursed the strong pulsations of his vigorous blood, lest they should disturb the sleep which gave him time to think and plan for safety. Twice he put his hand on his scimitar, with the idea of striking off the head of his enemy; but the difficulty of cutting through the close-haired skin made him renounce the bold attempt. Suppose he missed his aim? It would, he knew, be certain death. He preferred the chances of a struggle, and resolved to await the dawn. It was not long in coming. As daylight broke, the Frenchman was able to examine the animal. Its muzzle was stained with blood. "It has eaten a good meal," thought he, not caring whether the feast were human flesh or not; "it will not be hungry when it wakes."

It was a female. The fur on the belly and on the thighs was of sparkling whiteness. Several little spots like velvet made pretty bracelets round her paws. The

muscular tail was also white, but it terminated with black rings. The fur of the back, yellow as dead gold and very soft and glossy, bore the characteristic spots, shaded like a full-blown rose, which distinguish the panther from all other species of *felis*. This terrible hostess lay tranquilly snoring, in an attitude as easy and graceful as that of a cat on the cushions of an ottoman. Her bloody paws, sinewy and well-armed, were stretched beyond her head, which lay upon them; and from her muzzle projected a few straight hairs called whiskers, which shimmered in the early light like silver wires. If he had seen her lying thus imprisoned in a cage, the Provençal would have admired the creature's grace, and the strong contrasts of vivid color which gave to her robe an imperial splendor; but as it was, his sight was jaundiced by sinister forebodings. The presence of the panther, though she was still asleep, had the same effect upon his mind as the magnetic eyes of a snake produce, we are told, upon the nightingale. The soldier's courage oozed away in presence of this silent peril, though he was a man who gathered nerve before the mouths of cannon belching grape-shot. And yet, ere long, a bold thought entered his mind, and checked the cold sweat which was rolling from his brow. Roused to action, as some men are when, driven face to face with death, they defy it and offer themselves to their doom, he saw a tragedy before him, and he resolved to play his part with honor to the last.

"Yesterday," he said, "the Arabs might have killed me."

Regarding himself as dead, he waited bravely, but with anxious curiosity, for the waking of his enemy.

When the sun rose, the panther suddenly opened her eyes ; then she stretched her paws violently, as if to unlimber them from the cramp of their position. Presently she yawned and showed the frightful armament of her teeth, and her cloven tongue, rough as a grater.

"She is like a dainty woman," thought the Frenchman, watching her as she rolled and turned on her side with an easy and coquettish movement. She licked the blood from her paws, and rubbed her head with a reiterated movement full of grace.

"Well done ! dress yourself prettily, my little woman," said the Frenchman, who recovered his gayety as soon as he had recovered his courage. "We are going to bid each other good-morning ;" and he felt for the short poniard which he had taken from the Maugrabins.

At this instant the panther turned her head towards the Frenchman and looked at him fixedly, without moving. The rigidity of her metallic eyes and their insupportable clearness made the Provençal shudder. The beast moved towards him ; he looked at her caressingly, with a soothing glance by which he hoped to magnetize her. He let her come quite close to him before he stirred ; then, with a touch as gentle and loving as he might have used to a pretty woman, he slid his hand along her spine from the head to the flanks, scratching with his nails the flexible vertebræ which divide the yellow back of a panther. The creature drew up her tail voluptuously, her eyes softened, and when for the third time the Frenchman bestowed this self-interested caress, she gave vent to a purr like that with which a cat expresses pleasure ; but it issued from a throat so deep and powerful that the sound echoed through the

“He began to play with her ears and stroke her belly, and at last he scratched her head firmly with his nails.”



A. Bourdier

Cap. 100. 1896 by Annette Bosc

A. Bourdier &
Paris 1896

grotto like the last chords of an organ rolling along the roof of a church. The Provençal, perceiving the value of his caresses, redoubled them, until they had completely soothed and lulled the imperious courtesan.

When he felt that he had subdued the ferocity of his capricious companion, whose hunger had so fortunately been appeased the night before, he rose to leave the grotto. The panther let him go; but as soon as he reached the top of the little hill she bounded after him with the lightness of a bird hopping from branch to branch, and rubbed against his legs, arching her back with the gesture of a domestic cat. Then looking at her guest with an eye that was growing less inflexible, she uttered the savage cry which naturalists liken to the noise of a saw.

“My lady is exacting,” cried the Frenchman, smiling. He began to play with her ears and stroke her belly, and at last he scratched her head firmly with his nails. Encouraged by success, he tickled her skull with the point of his dagger, looking for the right spot where to stab her; but the hardness of the bone made him pause, dreading failure.

The sultana of the desert acknowledged the talents of her slave by lifting her head and swaying her neck to his caresses, betraying satisfaction by the tranquillity of her relaxed attitude. The Frenchman suddenly perceived that he could assassinate the fierce princess at a blow, if he struck her in the throat; and he had raised the weapon, when the panther, surfeited perhaps with his caresses, threw herself gracefully at his feet, glancing up at him with a look in which, despite her natural ferocity, a flicker of kindness could be seen. The poor

Provençal, frustrated for the moment, ate his dates as he leaned against a palm-tree, casting from time to time an interrogating eye across the desert in the hope of discerning rescue from afar, and then lowering it upon his terrible companion, to watch the chances of her uncertain clemency. Each time that he threw away a date-stone the panther eyed the spot where it fell with an expression of keen distrust; and she examined the Frenchman with what might be called commercial prudence. The examination, however, seemed favorable, for when the man had finished his meagre meal she licked his shoes and wiped off the dust, which was caked into the folds of the leather, with her rough and powerful tongue.

“How will it be when she is hungry?” thought the Provençal. In spite of the shudder which this reflection cost him, his attention was attracted by the symmetrical proportions of the animal, and he began to measure them with his eye. She was three feet in height to the shoulder, and four feet long, not including the tail. That powerful weapon, which was round as a club, measured three feet. The head, as large as that of a lioness, was remarkable for an expression of crafty intelligence; the cold cruelty of a tiger was its ruling trait, and yet it bore a vague resemblance to the face of an artful woman. As the soldier watched her, the countenance of this solitary queen shone with savage gayety like that of Nero in his cups: she had slaked her thirst for blood, and now wished for play. The Frenchman tried to come and go, and accustom her to his movements. The panther left him free, as if contented to follow him with her eyes, seeming, however, less like a faithful dog watching

his master's movements with affection, than a huge Angora cat uneasy and suspicious of them. A few steps brought him to the spring, where he saw the carcass of his horse, which the panther had evidently carried there. Only two thirds was eaten. The sight reassured the Frenchman; for it explained the absence of his terrible companion and the forbearance which she had shown to him while asleep.

This first good luck encouraged the reckless soldier as he thought of the future. The wild idea of making a home with the panther until some chance of escape occurred entered his mind, and he resolved to try every means of taming her and of turning her good-will to account. With these thoughts he returned to her side, and noticed joyfully that she moved her tail with an almost imperceptible motion. He sat down beside her fearlessly, and they began to play with each other. He held her paws and her muzzle, twisted her ears, threw her over on her back, and stroked her soft, warm flanks. She allowed him to do so; and when he began to smooth the fur of her paws, she carefully drew in her murderous claws, which were sharp and curved like a Damascus blade. The Frenchman kept one hand on his dagger, again watching his opportunity to plunge it into the belly of the too-confiding beast; but the fear that she might strangle him in her last convulsions once more stayed his hand. Moreover, he felt in his heart a foreboding of remorse which warned him not to destroy a hitherto inoffensive creature. He even fancied that he had found a friend in the limitless desert. His mind turned back, involuntarily, to his first mistress, whom he had named in derision "*Mignonne*," because

her jealousy was so furious that throughout the whole period of their intercourse he lived in dread of the knife with which she threatened him. This recollection of his youth suggested the idea of teaching the young panther, whose soft agility and grace he now admired with less terror, to answer to the caressing name. Towards evening he had grown so familiar with his perilous position that he was half in love with its dangers, and his companion was so far tamed that she had caught the habit of turning to him when he called, in falsetto tones, "Mignonne!"

As the sun went down Mignonne uttered at intervals a prolonged, deep, melancholy cry.

"She is well brought up," thought the gay soldier. "She says her prayers." But the jest only came into his mind as he watched the peaceful attitude of his comrade.

"Come, my pretty blonde, I will let you go to bed first," he said, relying on the activity of his legs to get away as soon as she fell asleep, and trusting to find some other resting-place for the night. He waited anxiously for the right moment, and when it came he started vigorously in the direction of the Nile. But he had scarcely marched for half an hour through the sand before he heard the panther bounding after him, giving at intervals the saw-like cry which was more terrible to hear than the thud of her bounds.

"Well, well!" he cried, "she must have fallen in love with me! Perhaps she has never met any one else. It is flattering to be her first love."

So thinking, he fell into one of the treacherous quicksands which deceive the inexperienced traveller in the

desert, and from which there is seldom any escape. He felt he was sinking, and he uttered a cry of despair. The panther seized him by the collar with her teeth, and sprang vigorously backward, drawing him, like magic, from the sucking sand.

“Ah, Mignonne!” cried the soldier, kissing her with enthusiasm, “we belong to each other now,—for life, for death! But play me no tricks,” he added, as he turned back the way he came.

From that moment the desert was, as it were, peopled for him. It held a being to whom he could talk, and whose ferocity was now lulled into gentleness, although he could scarcely explain to himself the reasons for this extraordinary friendship. His anxiety to keep awake and on his guard succumbed to excessive weariness both of body and mind, and throwing himself down on the floor of the grotto he slept soundly. At his waking Mignonne was gone. He mounted the little hill to scan the horizon, and perceived her in the far distance returning with the long bounds peculiar to these animals, who are prevented from running by the extreme flexibility of their spinal column.

Mignonne came home with bloody jaws, and received the tribute of caresses which her slave hastened to pay, all the while manifesting her pleasure by reiterated purring.

Her eyes, now soft and gentle, rested kindly on the Provençal, who spoke to her lovingly as he would to a domestic animal.

“Ah! Mademoiselle,—for you are an honest girl, are you not? You like to be petted, don’t you? Are you not ashamed of yourself? You have been eating a Maugrabin. Well, well! they are animals like the rest

of you. But you are not to craunch up a Frenchman; remember that! If you do, I will not love you."

She played like a young dog with her master, and let him roll her over and pat and stroke her, and sometimes she would coax him to play by laying a paw upon his knee with a pretty soliciting gesture.

Several days passed rapidly. This strange companionship revealed to the Provençal the sublime beauties of the desert. The alternations of hope and fear, the sufficiency of food, the presence of a creature who occupied his thoughts,—all this kept his mind alert, yet free: it was a life full of strange contrasts. Solitude revealed to him her secrets, and wrapped him with her charm. In the rising and the setting of the sun he saw splendors unknown to the world of men. He quivered as he listened to the soft whirring of the wings of a bird,—rare visitant!—or watched the blending of the fleeting clouds,—those changeful and many-tinted voyagers. In the waking hours of the night he studied the play of the moon upon the sandy ocean, where the strong si-moom had rippled the surface into waves and ever-varying undulations. He lived in the Eastern day; he worshipped its marvellous glory. He rejoiced in the grandeur of the storms when they rolled across the vast plain, and tossed the sand upward till it looked like a dry red fog or a solid death-dealing vapor; and as the night came on he welcomed it with ecstasy, grateful for the blessed coolness of the light of the stars. His ears listened to the music of the skies. Solitude taught him the treasures of meditation. He spent hours in recalling trifles, and in comparing his past life with the weird present.

He grew fondly attached to his panther ; for he was a man who needed an affection. Whether it were that his own will, magnetically strong, had modified the nature of his savage princess, or that the wars then raging in the desert had provided her with an ample supply of food, it is certain that she showed no sign of attacking him, and became so tame that he soon felt no fear of her. He spent much of his time in sleeping ; though with his mind awake, like a spider in its web, lest he should miss some deliverance that might chance to cross the sandy sphere marked out by the horizon. He had made his shirt into a banner and tied it to the top of a palm-tree which he had stripped of its leafage. Taking counsel of necessity, he kept the flag extended by fastening the corners with twigs and wedges ; for the fitful wind might have failed to wave it at the moment when the longed-for succor came in sight.

Nevertheless, there were long hours of gloom when hope forsook him ; and then he played with his panther. He learned to know the different inflections of her voice and the meanings of her expressive glance ; he studied the variegation of the spots which shaded the dead gold of her robe. Mignonne no longer growled when he caught the tuft of her dangerous tail and counted the black and white rings which glittered in the sunlight like a cluster of precious stones. He delighted in the soft lines of her lithe body, the whiteness of her belly, the grace of her charming head : but above all he loved to watch her as she gambolled at play. The agility and youthfulness of her movements were a constantly fresh surprise to him. He admired the suppleness of

the flexible body as she bounded, crept, and glided, or clung to the trunk of palm-trees, or rolled over and over, crouching sometimes to the ground, and gathering herself together as she made ready for her vigorous spring. Yet, however vigorous the bound, however slippery the granite block on which she landed, she would stop short, motionless, at the one word "Mignonne."

One day, under a dazzling sun, a large bird hovered in the sky. The Provençal left his panther to watch the new guest. After a moment's pause the neglected sultana uttered a low growl.

"The devil take me! I believe she is jealous!" exclaimed the soldier, observing the rigid look which once more appeared in her metallic eyes. "The soul of Sophronie has got into her body!"

The eagle disappeared in ether, and the Frenchman, recalled by the panther's displeasure, admired afresh her rounded flanks and the perfect grace of her attitude. She was as pretty as a woman. The blonde brightness of her robe shaded, with delicate gradations, to the dead-white tones of her furry thighs; the vivid sunshine brought out the brilliancy of this living gold and its variegated brown spots with indescribable lustre. The panther and the Provençal gazed at each other with human comprehension. She trembled with delight—the coquettish creature!—as she felt the nails of her friend scratching the strong bones of her skull. Her eyes glittered like flashes of lightning, and then she closed them tightly.

"She has a soul!" cried the soldier, watching the tranquil repose of this sovereign of the desert, golden

as the sands, white as their pulsing light, solitary and burning as they.

“Well,” she said, “I have read your defence of the beasts. But tell me what was the end of this friendship between two beings so formed to understand each other.”

“Ah, exactly,” I replied. “It ended as all great passions end,—by a misunderstanding. Both sides imagine treachery, pride prevents an explanation, and the rupture comes about through obstinacy.”

“Yes,” she said, “and sometimes a word, a look, an exclamation suffices. But tell me the end of the story.”

“That is difficult,” I answered. “But I will give it to you in the words of the old veteran, as he finished the bottle of champagne and exclaimed: ‘I don’t know how I could have hurt her, but she suddenly turned upon me as if in fury, and seized my thigh with her sharp teeth; and yet (as I afterwards remembered) not cruelly. I thought she meant to devour me, and I plunged my dagger into her throat. She rolled over with a cry that froze my soul; she looked at me in her death-struggle, but without anger. I would have given all the world—my cross, which I had not then gained, all, everything—to have brought her back to life. It was as if I had murdered a friend, a human being. When the soldiers who saw my flag came to my rescue they found me weeping. Monsieur,’ he resumed, after a moment’s silence, ‘I went through the wars in Germany, Spain, Russia, France; I have marched my carcass wellnigh over all the world; but I have seen

.

nothing comparable to the desert. Ah, it is grand! glorious!’

“ ‘What were your feelings there?’ I asked.

“ ‘They cannot be told, young man. Besides, I do not always regret my panther and my palm-tree oasis: I must be very sad for that. But I will tell you this: in the desert there is all — and yet nothing.’

“ ‘Stay! — explain that.’

“ ‘Well, then,’ he said, with a gesture of impatience, ‘God is there, and man is not.’”

THE END.

THE COMEDY OF HUMAN LIFE

By H. DE BALZAC

SCENES FROM POLITICAL LIFE

THE
BROTHERHOOD OF CONSOLATION

Z. MARCAS



Madame de la Chanterie.

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MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE.

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THE BROTHERHOOD OF CONSOLATION.

FIRST EPISODE.

MADAME DE LA CHANTERIE.

I.

THE MALADY OF THE AGE.

ON a fine evening in the month of September, 1836, a man about thirty years of age was leaning on the parapet of that quay from which a spectator can look up the Seine from the Jardin des Plantes to Notre-Dame, and down, along the vast perspective of the river, to the Louvre. There is not another point of view to compare with it in the capital of ideas. We feel ourselves on the quarter-deck, as it were, of a gigantic vessel. We dream of Paris from the days of the Romans to those of the Franks, from the Normans to the Burgundians, the Middle-Ages, the Valois, Henri IV., Louis XIV., Napoleon, and Louis-Philippe. Vestiges are before us of all those sover-

eignties, in monuments that recall their memory. The cupola of Sainte-Geneviève towers above the Latin quarter. Behind us rises the noble apsis of the cathedral. The Hôtel de Ville tells of revolutions; the Hôtel-Dieu, of the miseries of Paris. After gazing at the splendors of the Louvre we can, by taking two steps, look down upon the rags and tatters of that ignoble nest of houses huddling between the quai de la Tournelle and the Hôtel-Dieu, — a foul spot, which a modern municipality is endeavoring at the present moment to remove.

In 1835 this marvellous scene presented still another lesson to the eye: between the Parisian leaning on the parapet and the cathedral lay the “Terrain” (such was the ancient name of that barren spot), still strewn with the ruins of the Archiepiscopal Palace. When we contemplate from that quay so many commemorating scenes, when the soul has grasped the past as it does the present of this city of Paris, then indeed Religion seems to have alighted there as if to spread her hands above the sorrows of both banks and extend her arms from the faubourg Saint-Antoine to the faubourg Saint-Marceau. Let us hope that this sublime unity may be completed by the erection of an episcopal palace of the Gothic order; which shall replace the formless buildings now standing between the “Terrain,” the rue d’Arcole, the cathedral, and the quai de la Cité.

This spot, the heart of ancient Paris, is the loneliest and most melancholy of regions. The waters of the Seine break there noisily, the cathedral casts its shadows at the setting of the sun. We can easily believe that serious thoughts must have filled the mind of a man afflicted with a moral malady as he leaned upon that parapet. Attracted perhaps by the harmony between his thoughts at the moment and those to which these divers scenes gave birth, he rested his hands upon the coping and gave way to a double contemplation, — of Paris, and of himself! The shadows deepened, the lights shone out afar, but still he did not move, carried along as he was on the current of a meditation, such as comes to many of us, big with the future and rendered solemn by the past.

After a while he heard two persons coming towards him, whose voices had caught his attention on the bridge which joins the Île de la Cité with the quai de la Tournelle. These persons no doubt thought themselves alone, and therefore spoke louder than they would have done in more frequented places. The voices betrayed a discussion which apparently, from the few words that reached the ear of the involuntary listener, related to a loan of money. Just as the pair approached the quay, one of them, dressed like a working man, left the other with a despairing gesture. The other stopped and called after him, saying: —

“You have not a sou to pay your way across the bridge. Take this,” he added, giving the man a piece of money; “and remember, my friend, that God himself is speaking to us when a good thought comes into our hearts.”

This last remark made the dreamer at the parapet quiver. The man who made it little knew that, to use a proverbial expression, he was killing two birds with one stone, addressing two miseries, — a working life brought to despair, a suffering soul without a compass, the victim of what Panurge’s sheep call progress, and what, in France, is called equality. The words, simple in themselves, became sublime from the tone of him who said them, in a voice that possessed a spell. Are there not, in fact, some calm and tender voices that produce upon us the same effect as a far horizon outlook?

By his dress the dreamer knew him to be a priest, and he saw by the last gleams of the fading twilight a white, august, worn face. The sight of a priest issuing from the beautiful cathedral of Saint-Étienne in Vienna, bearing the Extreme Unction to a dying person, determined the celebrated tragic author Werner to become a Catholic. Almost the same effect was produced upon the dreamer when he looked upon the man who had, all unknowing, given him comfort; on the threatening horizon of his future he saw a luminous space where

shone the blue of ether, and he followed that light as the shepherds of the Gospel followed the voices that cried to them: "Christ, the Lord, is born this day."

The man who had said the beneficent words passed on by the wall of the cathedral, taking, as a result of chance, which often leads to great results, the direction of the street from which the dreamer came, and to which he was now returning, led by the faults of his life.

This dreamer was named Godefroid. Whoever reads this history will understand the reasons which lead the writer to use the Christian names only of some who are mentioned in it. The motives which led Godefroid, who lived in the quarter of the *Chaussée-d'Antin*, to the neighborhood of *Notre-Dame* at such an hour were as follows:—

The son of a retail shopkeeper, whose economy enabled him to lay by a sort of fortune, he was the sole object of ambition to his father and mother, who dreamed of seeing him a notary in Paris. For this reason, at the early age of seven, he was sent to an institution, that of the *Abbé Liautard*, to be thrown among children of distinguished families who, during the Empire, chose this school for the education of their sons in preference to the lyceums, where religion was too much overlooked. Social inequalities were not noticeable among schoolmates; but in 1821, his stud-

ies being ended, Godefroid, who was then with a notary, became aware of the distance that separated him from those with whom he had hitherto lived on familiar terms.

Obliged to go through the law school, he there found himself among a crowd of the sons of the bourgeoisie, who, without fortunes to inherit or hereditary distinctions, could look only to their own personal merits or to persistent toil. The hopes that his father and mother, then retired from business, placed upon him stimulated the youth's vanity without exciting his pride. His parents lived simply, like the thrifty Dutch, spending only one fourth of an income of twelve thousand francs. They intended their savings, together with half their capital, for the purchase of a notary's practice for their son. Subjected to the rule of this domestic economy, Godefroid found his immediate state so disproportioned to the visions of himself and his parents, that he grew discouraged. In some feeble natures discouragement turns to envy; others, in whom necessity, will, reflection, stand in place of talent, march straight and resolutely in the path traced out for bourgeois ambitions. Godefroid, on the contrary, revolted, wished to shine, tried several brilliant ways, and blinded his eyes. He endeavored to succeed; but all his efforts ended in proving the fact of his own impotence. Admitting at last the inequality that existed between his desires

and his capacities, he began to hate all social supremacies, became a Liberal, and attempted to reach celebrity by writing a book ; but he learned, to his cost, to regard talent as he did nobility. Having tried the law, the notariat, and literature, without distinguishing himself in any way, his mind now turned to the magistracy.

About this time his father died. His mother, who contented herself in her old age with two thousand francs a year, gave the rest of the fortune to Godefroid. Thus possessed, at the age of twenty-five, of ten thousand francs a year, he felt himself rich ; and he was so, relatively to the past. Until then his life had been spent on acts without will, on wishes that were impotent ; now, to advance with the age, to act, to play a part, he resolved to enter some career or find some connection that should further his fortunes. He first thought of journalism, which always opens its arms to any capital that may come in its way. To be the owner of a newspaper is to become a personage at once ; such a man works intellect, and has all the gratifications of it and none of the labor. Nothing is more tempting to inferior minds than to be able to rise in this way on the talents of others. Paris has seen two or three parvenus of this kind, — men whose success is a disgrace, both to the epoch and to those who have lent them their shoulders.

In this sphere Godefroid was soon outdone by the brutal machiavelianism of some, or by the lavish prodigality of others ; by the fortunes of ambitious capitalists, or by the wit and shrewdness of editors. Meantime he was drawn into all the dissipations that arise from literary or political life, and he yielded to the temptations incurred by journalists behind the scenes. He soon found himself in bad company ; but this experience taught him that his appearance was insignificant, that he had one shoulder higher than the other, without the inequality being redeemed by either malignancy or kindness of nature. Such were the truths these artists made him feel.

Small, ill-made, without superiority of mind or settled purpose, what chance was there for a man like this in an age when success in any career demands that the highest qualities of the mind be furthered by luck, or by tenacity of will which commands luck.

The revolution of 1830 stanchd Godefroid's wounds. He had the courage of hope, which is equal to that of despair. He obtained an appointment, like other obscure journalists, to a government situation in the provinces, where his liberal ideas, conflicting with the necessities of the new power, made him a troublesome . . . instrument. Bitten with liberalism, he did not know, as cleverer men did, how to steer a course. Obedience to ministers he regarded as sacrificing his opinions.

Besides, the government seemed to him to be disobeying the laws of its own origin. Godefroid declared for progress, when the object of the government was to maintain the *statu quo*. He returned to Paris almost poor, but faithful still to the doctrines of the Opposition.

Alarmed by the excesses of the press, more alarmed still by the attempted outrages of the republican party, he sought in retirement from the world the only life suitable for a being whose faculties were incomplete, and without sufficient force to bear up against the rough jostling of political life, the struggles and sufferings of which confer no credit, — a being, too, who was wearied with his many miscarriages; without friends, for friendship demands either striking merits or striking defects, and yet possessing a sensibility of soul more dreamy than profound. Surely a retired life was the course left for a young man whom pleasure had more than once misled, — whose heart was already aged by contact with a world as restless as it was disappointing.

His mother, who was dying in the peaceful village of Auteuil, recalled her son to live with her, partly to have him near her, and partly to put him in the way of finding an equable, tranquil happiness which might satisfy a soul like his. She had ended by judging Godefroid, finding him at twenty-eight with two thirds of his fortune gone, his desires dulled, his pretended

capacities extinct, his activity dead, his ambition humbled, and his hatred against all that reached legitimate success increased by his own shortcomings.

She tried to marry him to an excellent young girl, the only daughter of a retired merchant, — a woman well fitted to play the part of guardian to the sickened soul of her son. But the father had the business spirit which never abandons an old merchant, especially in matrimonial negotiations, and after a year of attentions and neighborly intercourse, Godefroid was not accepted. In the first place, his former career seemed to these worthy people profoundly immoral; then, during this very year, he had made still further inroads into his capital, as much to dazzle the parents as to please the daughter. This vanity, excusable as it was, caused his final rejection by the family, who held dissipation of property in holy horror, and who now discovered that in six years Godefroid had spent or lost a hundred and fifty thousand francs of his capital.

This blow struck the young man's already wounded heart the more deeply because the girl herself had no personal beauty. But, guided by his mother in judging her character, he had ended by recognizing in the woman he sought the great value of an earnest soul, and the vast advantages of a sound mind. He had grown accustomed to the face; he had studied the

countenance ; he loved the voice, the manners, the glance of that young girl. Having cast on this attachment the last stake of his life, the disappointment he endured was the bitterest of all. His mother died, and he found himself, he who had always desired luxury, with five thousand francs a year for his whole fortune, and with the certainty that never in his future life could he repair any loss whatsoever ; for he felt himself incapable of the effort expressed in that terrible injunction, *to make his way*.

Weak, impatient grief cannot be easily shaken off. During his mourning, Godefroid tried the various chances and distractions of Paris ; he dined at table-d'hôtes ; he made acquaintances heedlessly ; he sought society, with no result but that of increasing his expenditures. Walking along the boulevards, he often suffered deeply at the sight of a mother walking with a marriageable daughter, — a sight which caused him as painful an emotion as he formerly felt when a young man passed him riding to the Bois, or driving in an elegant equipage. The sense of his impotence told him that he could never hope for the best of even secondary positions, nor for any easily won career ; and he had heart enough to feel constantly wounded, mind enough to make in his own breast the bitterest of elegies.

Unfitted to struggle against circumstances, having an inward consciousness of superior faculties without

the will that could put them in action, feeling himself incomplete, without force to undertake any great thing, without resistance against the tastes derived from his earlier life, his education, and his indolence, he was the victim of three maladies, any one of which would be enough to sicken of life a young man long alienated from religious faith.

Thus it was that Godefroid presented, even to the eye, the face that we meet so often in Paris that it might be called the type of a Parisian; in it we may see ambitions deceived or dead, inward wretchedness, hatred sleeping in the indolence of a life passed in watching the daily and external life of Paris, apathy which seeks stimulation, lament without talent, a mimicry of strength, the venom of past disappointments which excites to cynicism, and spits upon all that enlarges and grows, misconceives all necessary authority, rejoicing in its embarrassments, and will not hold to any social form. This Parisian malady is to the active and permanent impulse towards conspiracy in persons of energy what the sapwood is to the sap of the trees it preserves it, feeds it, and conceals it.

II.

OLD HOUSE, OLD PEOPLE, OLD CUSTOMS.

WEARY of himself, Godefroid attempted one day to give a meaning to his life, after meeting a former comrade who had been the tortoise in the fable, while he in earlier days had been the hare. In one of those conversations which arise when schoolmates meet again in after years,—a conversation held as they were walking together in the sunshine on the boulevard des Italiens,—he was startled to learn the success of a man endowed apparently with less gifts, less means, less fortune than himself; but who had bent his will each morning to the purpose resolved upon the night before. The sick soul then determined to imitate that simple action.

“Social existence is like the soil,” his comrade had said to him; “it makes us a return in proportion to our efforts.”

Godefroid was in debt. As a first test, a first task, he resolved to live in some retired place, and pay his debts from his income. To a man accustomed to spend six thousand francs when he had but five, it was no

small undertaking to bring himself to live on two thousand. Every morning he studied advertisements, hoping to find the offer of some asylum where his expenses could be fixed, where he might have the solitude a man wants when he makes a return upon himself, examines himself, and endeavors to give himself a vocation. The manners and customs of bourgeois boarding-houses shocked his delicacy, sanitariums seemed to him unhealthy, and he was about to fall back into the fatal irresolution of persons without will, when the following advertisement met his eye : —

“TO LET. A small lodging for seventy francs a month; suitable for an ecclesiastic. A quiet tenant desired. Board supplied; the rooms can be furnished at a moderate cost if mutually acceptable.

“Inquire of M. Millet, grocer, rue Chanoinesse, near Notre-Dame, where all further information can be obtained.”

Attracted by a certain kindliness concealed beneath these words, and the middle-class air which exhaled from them, Godefroid had, on the afternoon when we found him on the quay, called at four o'clock on the grocer, who told him that Madame de la Chanterie was then dining, and did not receive any one when at her meals. The lady, he said, was visible in the evening after seven o'clock, or in the morning between ten and twelve. While speaking, Monsieur Millet examined

Godefroid, and made him submit to what magistrates call the "first degree of interrogation."

"Was monsieur unmarried? Madame wished a person of regular habits; the gate was closed at eleven at the latest. Monsieur certainly seemed of an age to suit Madame de la Chanterie."

"How old do you think me?" asked Godefroid.

"About forty!" replied the grocer.

This ingenuous answer threw the young man into a state of misanthropic gloom. He went off and dined at a restaurant on the quai de la Tournelle, and afterwards went to the parapet to contemplate Notre-Dame at the moment when the fires of the setting sun were rippling and breaking about the manifold buttresses of the apsis.

The young man was floating between the promptings of despair and the moving voice of religious harmonies sounding in the bell of the cathedral when, amid the shadows, the silence, the half-veiled light of the moon, he heard the words of the priest. Though, like most of the sons of our century, he was far from religious, his sensibilities were touched by those words, and he returned to the rue Chanoinesse, although he had almost made up his mind not to do so.

The priest and Godefroid were both surprised when they entered together the rue Massillon, which is opposite to the small north portal of the cathedral, and

turned together into the rue Chanoinesse, at the point where, towards the rue de la Colombe, it becomes the rue des Marmousets. When Godefroid stopped before the arched portal of Madame de la Chanterie's house, the priest turned towards him and examined him by the light of the hanging street-lamp, probably one of the last to disappear from the heart of old Paris.

"Have you come to see Madame de la Chanterie, monsieur?" said the priest.

"Yes," replied Godefroid. "The words I heard you say to that workman show me that, if you live here, this house must be salutary for the soul."

"Then you were a witness of my defeat," said the priest, raising the knocker of the door, "for I did not succeed."

"I thought, on the contrary, it was the workman who did not succeed; he demanded money energetically."

"Alas!" replied the priest, "one of the great evils of revolutions in France is that each offers a fresh premium to the ambitions of the lower classes. To get out of his condition, to make his fortune (which is regarded to-day as the only social standard), the working-man throws himself into some of those monstrous associations which, if they do not succeed, ought to bring the speculators to account before human justice. This is what trusts often lead to."

The porter opened a heavy door. The priest said to

Godefroid: "Monsieur has perhaps come about the little suite of rooms?"

"Yes, monsieur."

The priest and Godefroid then crossed a wide courtyard, at the farther end of which loomed darkly a tall house flanked by a square tower which rose above the roof, and appeared to be in a dilapidated condition. Whoever knows the history of Paris, knows that the soil before and around the cathedral has been so raised that there is not a vestige now of the twelve steps which formerly led up to it. To-day the base of the columns of the porch is on a level with the pavement; consequently what was once the ground-floor of the house of which we speak is now its cellar. A portico, reached by a few steps, leads to the entrance of the tower, in which a spiral stairway winds up round a central shaft carved with a grape-vine. This style, which recalls the stairways of Louis XII. at the château of Blois, dates from the fourteenth century. Struck by these and other evidences of antiquity, Godefroid could not help saying, with a smile, to the priest: "This tower is not of yesterday."

"It sustained, they say, an assault of the Normans, and probably formed part of the first palace of the kings of Paris; but, according to actual tradition, it was certainly the dwelling of the famous Canon Fulbert, the uncle of Héloïse."

As he ended these words, the priest opened the door of the apartment which appeared now to be the ground-floor of the house, but was in reality towards both the front and back courtyard (for there was a small interior court) on the first floor.

In the antechamber a maid-servant, wearing a cambric cap with fluted frills for its sole decoration, was knitting by the light of a little lamp. She stuck her needles into her hair, held her work in her hand, and rose to open the door of a salon which looked out on the inner court. The dress of the woman was somewhat like that of the Sisters of Mercy.

"Madame, I bring you a tenant," said the priest, ushering Godefroid into the salon, where the latter saw three persons sitting in armchairs near Madame de la Chanterie.

These three persons rose; the mistress of the house rose; then, when the priest had drawn up another armchair for Godefroid, and when the future tenant had seated himself in obedience to a gesture of Madame de la Chanterie, accompanied by the old-fashioned words, "Be seated, monsieur," the man of the boulevards fancied himself at some enormous distance from Paris, — in lower Brittany or the wilds of Canada.

Silence has perhaps its own degrees. Godefroid, already penetrated with the silence of the rues Massillon and Chanoinesse, where two carriages do not pass in

a month, and grasped by the silence of the courtyard and the tower, may have felt that he had reached the very heart of silence in this still salon, guarded by so many old streets, old courts, old walls.

This part of the Île, which is called "the Cloister," has preserved the character of all cloisters; it is damp, cold, and monastically silent even at the noisiest hours of the day. It will be remarked, also, that this portion of the Cité, crowded between the flank of Notre-Dame and the river, faces the north, and is always in the shadow of the cathedral. The east winds swirl through it unopposed, and the fogs of the Seine are caught and retained by the black walls of the old metropolitan church. No one will therefore be surprised at the sensations Godefroid felt when he found himself in this old dwelling, in presence of four silent human beings, who seemed as solemn as the things which surrounded them.

He did not look about him, being seized with curiosity as to Madame de la Chanterie, whose name was already a puzzle to him. This lady was evidently a person of another epoch, not to say of another world. Her face was placid, its tones both soft and cold; the nose aquiline; the forehead full of sweetness; the eyes brown; the chin double; and all were framed in silvery white hair. Her gown could only be called by its ancient name of "fourreau," so tightly was she

sheathed within it, after the fashion of the eighteenth century. The material — a brown silk, with very fine and multiplied green lines — seemed also of that period. The bodice, which was one with the skirt, was partly hidden beneath a mantle of *poult-de-soie* edged with black lace, and fastened on the bosom by a brooch enclosing a miniature. Her feet, in black velvet boots, rested on a cushion. Madame de la Chanterie, like her maid, was knitting a stocking, and she, too, had a needle stuck through her white curls beneath the lace of her cap.

“Have you seen Monsieur Millet?” she said to Godefroid, in the head voice peculiar to the dowagers of the faubourg Saint-Germain, observing that her visitor seemed confused, and as if to put the words into his mouth.

“Yes, madame.”

“I fear that the apartment will scarcely suit you,” she said, noticing the elegance and newness of his clothes.

Godefroid was wearing polished leather boots, yellow gloves, handsome studs, and a very pretty gold chain passed through the buttonhole of his waistcoat of black silk with blue flowers. Madame de la Chanterie took a little silver whistle from her pocket and blew it. The serving-woman came.

“Manon, my child, show this gentleman the apart-

ment. Would you, my dear vicar, be so kind as to accompany him?" she said, addressing the priest. "If by chance," she added, rising and again looking at Godefroid, "the apartment suits you, we will talk of the conditions."

Godefroid bowed and went out. He heard the rattle of keys which Manon took from a drawer, and he saw her light the candle in a large brass candlestick. Manon went first, without uttering a word. When Godefroid found himself again on the staircase, winding up two flights, he doubted the reality of life, he dreamed awake, he saw with his eyes the fantastic world of romances he had read in his idle hours. Any Parisian leaving, as he did, the modern quarter, with its luxury of houses and furniture, the glitter of its restaurants and theatres, the tumult and movement of the heart of Paris, would have shared his feeling.

The candle carried by the woman feebly lighted the winding stair, where spiders swung their draperies gray with dust. Manon wore a petticoat with heavy plaits of a coarse woollen stuff; the bodice was square before and square behind, and all her clothes seemed to hang together. When she reached the second floor, which, it will be remembered, was actually the third, Manon stopped; turned a key in an ancient lock, and opened a door painted in a coarse imitation of mahogany.

“This is it,” she said, entering first.

Was it a miser, was it an artist dying in penury, was it a cynic to whom the world was naught, or some religious soul detached from life, who had occupied this apartment? That triple question might well be asked by one who breathed the odor of that poverty, who saw the greasy spots upon the papers yellow with smoke, the blackened ceilings, the dusty windows with their casement panes, the discolored floor-bricks, the wainscots layered with a sort of sticky glaze. A damp chill came from the chimneys with their mantels of painted stone, surmounted by mirrors in panels of the style of the seventeenth century. The apartment was square, like the house, and looked out upon the inner court, which could not now be seen because of the darkness.

“Who has lived here?” asked Godefroid of the priest.

“A former councillor of the parliament, a great-uncle of madame, Monsieur de Boisfrelon. After the Revolution he fell into dotage; but he did not die until 1832, at the age of ninety-six. Madame could not at first make up her mind to let his rooms to a stranger, but she finds she cannot afford to lose the rent.”

“Madame will have the apartment cleaned and furnished in a manner to satisfy monsieur,” said Manon.

“That will depend on the arrangement you make

with her," said the priest. "You have here a fine parlor, a large sleeping-room and closet, and those little rooms in the angle will make an excellent study. It is the same arrangement as in my apartment below, also in the one overhead."

"Yes," said Manon, "Monsieur Alain's apartment is just like this, only his has a view of the tower."

"I think I had better see the rooms by daylight," said Godefroid, timidly.

"Perhaps so," said Manon.

The priest and Godefroid went downstairs, leaving the woman to lock the doors. When they re-entered the salon, Godefroid, who was getting inured to the surroundings, looked about him while discoursing with Madame de la Chanterie, and examined the persons and things there present.

The salon had curtains at its windows of old red damask, with lambrequins, tied back at the sides with silken cords. The red-tiled floor showed at the edges of an old tapestry carpet too small to cover the whole room. The woodwork was painted gray. The plastered ceiling, divided in two parts by a heavy beam which started from the fireplace, seemed a concession tardily made to luxury. Armchairs, with their woodwork painted white, were covered with tapestry. A paltry clock, between two copper-gilt candlesticks, decorated the mantel-shelf. Beside Madame de la

Chanterie was an ancient table with spindle legs, on which lay her balls of worsted in a wicker basket. A hydrostatic lamp lighted the scene. The four men, who were seated there, silent, immovable, like bronze statues, had evidently stopped their conversation with Madame de la Chanterie when they heard the stranger returning. They all had cold, discreet faces, in keeping with the room, the house, the quarter of the town.

Madame de la Chanterie admitted the justice of Godefroid's observations; but told him that she did not wish to make any change until she knew the intentions of her lodger, or rather her boarder. If he would conform to the customs of the house he could become her boarder; but these customs were widely different from those of Paris. Life in the rue Chanoinesse was like provincial life: the lodger must always be in by ten o'clock at night; they disliked noise; and could have no women or children to break up their customary habits. An ecclesiastic might conform to these ways. Madame de la Chanterie desired, above all, some one of simple life, who would not be exacting; she could afford to put only the strictest necessities into the apartment. Monsieur Alain (here she designated one of the four men present) was satisfied, and she would do for a new tenant just as she did for the others.

"I do not think," said the priest, "that monsieur is inclined to enter our convent."

“Eh! why not?” said Monsieur Alain; “we are all well off here; we have nothing to complain of.”

“Madame,” said Godefroid, rising, “I shall have the honor of calling again to-morrow.”

Though he was a young man, the four old men and Madame de la Chanterie rose, and the vicar accompanied him to the portico. A whistle sounded. At that signal the porter came with a lantern, guided Godefroid to the street, and closed behind him the enormous yellow door, — ponderous as that of a prison, and decorated with arabesque ironwork of a remote period that was difficult to determine.

Though Godefroid got into a cabriolet, and was soon rolling into the living, lighted, glowing regions of Paris, what he had seen still appeared to him a dream, and his impressions, as he made his way along the boulevard des Italiens, had already the remoteness of a memory. He asked himself, “Shall I to-morrow find those people there?”

III.

THE HOUSE OF MONGENOD.

THE next day, as Godefroid rose amid the appointments of modern luxury and the choice appliances of English "comfort," he remembered the details of his visit to that cloister of Notre-Dame, and the meaning of the things he had seen there came into his mind. The three unknown and silent men, whose dress, attitude, and stillness acted powerfully upon him, were no doubt boarders like the priest. The solemnity of Madame de la Chanterie now seemed to him a secret dignity with which she bore some great misfortune. But still, in spite of the explanations which Godefroid gave himself, he could not help fancying there was an air of mystery about those sober figures.

He looked around him and selected the pieces of furniture that he would keep, those that were indispensable to him; but when he transported them in thought to the miserable lodging in the rue Chanoinesse, he began to laugh at the contrast they would make there, resolving to sell all and let Madame de la Chanterie furnish the rooms for him. He wanted

a new life, and the very sight of these objects would remind him of that which he wished to forget. In his desire for transformation (for he belonged to those characters who spring at a bound into the middle of a situation, instead of advancing, as others do, step by step), he was seized while he breakfasted with an idea, — he would turn his whole property into money, pay his debts, and place the remainder of his capital in the banking-house with which his father had done business.

This house was the firm of Mongenod and Company, established in 1816 or 1817, whose reputation for honesty and uprightness had never been questioned in the midst of the commercial depravity which smirched, more or less, all the banking-houses of Paris. In spite of their immense wealth, the houses of Nucingen, du Tillet, the Keller Brothers, Palma and Company, were each regarded, more or less, with secret disrespect, although it is true this disrespect was only whispered. Evil means had produced such fine results, such political successes, dynastic principles covered so completely base workings, that no one in 1834 thought of the mud in which the roots of these fine trees, the mainstay of the State, were plunged. Nevertheless there was not a single one of those great bankers to whom the confidence expressed in the house of Mongenod was not a wound. Like English houses, the

Mongenods made no external display of luxury. They lived in dignified stillness, satisfied to do their business prudently, wisely, and with a stern uprightness which enabled them to carry it from one end of the globe to the other.

The actual head of the house, Frédéric Mongenod, is the brother-in-law of the Vicomte de Fontaine; therefore, this numerous family is allied through the Baron de Fontaine to Monsieur Grossetête, the receiver-general, brother of the Grossetête and Company of Limoges, to the Vandenesses, and to Planat de Baudry, another receiver-general. These connections, having procured for the late Mongenod, father of the present head of the house, many favors in the financial operations under the Restoration, obtained for him also the confidence of the old *noblesse*, whose property and whose savings, which were immense, were deposited in this bank. Far from coveting a peerage, like the Kellers, Nucingen, and du Tillet, the Mongenods kept away from politics, and only knew as much about them as their banking interests demanded.

The house of Mongenod is established in a fine old mansion in the rue de la Victoire, where Madame Mongenod, the mother, lived with her two sons, all three being partners in the house, — the share of the Vicomtesse de Fontaine having been bought out by them on the death of the elder Mongenod in 1827.

Frédéric Mongenod, a handsome young man about thirty-five years of age, cold, silent, and reserved in manner like a Swiss, and neat as an Englishman, had acquired by intercourse with his father all the qualities necessary for his difficult profession. Better educated than the generality of bankers, his studies had the breadth and universality which characterize the polytechnic training; and he had, like most bankers, predilections and tastes outside of his business, — he loved mechanics and chemistry. The second brother, who was ten years younger than Frédéric, held the same position in the office of his elder brother that a head clerk holds in that of a notary or lawyer. Frédéric trained him, as he had himself been trained by his father, in the variety of knowledge necessary to a true banker, who is to money what a writer is to ideas, — they must both know all of that with which they have to deal.

When Godefroid reached the banking-house and gave his name, he saw at once the estimation in which his father had been held; for he was ushered through the offices without delay to the private counting-room of the Mongenods. This counting-room was closed with a glass door, so that Godefroid, without any desire to listen, overheard as he approached it what was being said there.

“Madame, your account is balanced to sixteen hun-

dred thousand francs," said the younger Mongenod. "I do not know what my brother's intentions are; he alone can say whether an advance of a hundred thousand francs can be made. You must have been imprudent. Sixteen hundred thousand francs should not be entrusted to any business."

"Do not speak so loud, Louis!" said a woman's voice. "Your brother has often told you to speak in a low voice. There may be some one in the next room."

At this moment Frédéric Mongenod himself opened the door of communication between his private house and the counting-room. He saw Godefroid and crossed the room, bowing respectfully to the lady who was conversing with his brother.

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" he said to Godefroid.

As soon as Godefroid gave his name, Frédéric begged him to be seated; and as the banker opened the lid of his desk, Louis Mongenod and the lady, who was no other than Madame de la Chanterie, rose and went up to him. All three then moved into the embrasure of a window and talked in a low voice with Madame Mongenod, the mother, who was sitting there, and to whom all the affairs of the bank were confided. For over thirty years this woman had given, to her husband first and then to her sons, such proofs of

business sagacity that she had long been a managing partner in the firm and signed for it.

Godefroid, as he looked about him, noticed on a shelf certain boxes ticketed with the words "De la Chanterie," and numbered 1 to 7. When the conference was ended by the banker saying to his brother, "Very good; go down to the cashier," Madame de la Chanterie turned round, saw Godefroid, checked a gesture of surprise, and asked a few questions of the banker in a low voice, to which he replied in a few words spoken equally in a whisper.

Madame de la Chanterie now wore gray silk stockings and small prunella shoes; her gown was the same as before, but she was wrapped in a Venetian "mantua," — a sort of cloak which was just then returning into fashion. On her head was a drawn bonnet of green silk, lined with white silk, of a style called *à la bonne femme*. Her face was framed by a cloud of lace. She held herself very erect, in an attitude which bespoke, if not noble birth, certainly the habits of an aristocratic life. Without the extreme affability of her manner, she might have seemed haughty; she was certainly imposing.

"It is the will of Providence rather than mere chance that has brought us here together, monsieur," she said to Godefroid; "for I had almost decided to refuse a lodger whose ways of life seemed to me quite

antipathetic to those of my household ; but Monsieur Mongenod has just given me some information about your family which —”

“ Ah, madame, — monsieur !” said Godefroid, addressing both Madame de la Chanterie and the banker, “ I have no longer a family ; and I have come here now to ask some financial advice of my father’s business advisers as to the best method of adapting my means to a new way of life.”

Godefroid then succinctly, and in as few words as possible, related his history, and expressed his desire to change his existence.

“ Formerly,” he said, “ a man in my position would have made himself a monk ; but there are no longer any religious orders.”

“ Go and live with madame, if she is willing to take you,” said Frédéric Mongenod, after exchanging a glance with Madame de la Chanterie, “ and do not sell out your property ; leave it in my hands. Give me the exact amount of your debts ; I will agree with your creditors for payment at certain dates, and you can have for yourself about a hundred and fifty francs a month. It will thus take about two years to clear you. During those two years, if you take those quiet lodgings, you will have time to think of a career, especially among the persons with whom you will live, who are all good counsellors.”

Here Louis Mongenod returned, bringing in his hand a hundred notes of a thousand francs each, which he gave to Madame de la Chanterie. Godefroid offered his arm to his future hostess, and took her down to the hackney-coach which was waiting for her.

"I hope I shall see you soon, monsieur," she said in a cordial tone of voice.

"At what hour shall you be at home, madame?" he asked.

"At two o'clock."

"I shall have time to sell my furniture," he said, as he bowed to her.

During the short time that Madame de la Chanterie's arm rested upon his as they walked to the carriage, Godefroid could not escape the glamour of the words: "Your account is for sixteen hundred thousand francs!" — words said by Louis Mongenod to the woman whose life was spent in the depths of the cloisters of Notre-Dame. The thought, "She must be rich!" entirely changed his way of looking at the matter. "How old is she?" he began to ask himself; and a vision of a romance in the rue Chanoinesse came to him. "She certainly has an air of nobility! Can she be concerned in some bank?" thought he.

In our day nine hundred and ninety-nine young men out of a thousand in Godefroid's position would have had the thought of marrying that woman.

A furniture dealer, who also had apartments to let, paid about three thousand francs for the articles Godefroid was willing to sell, and agreed to let him keep them during the few days that were needed to prepare the shabby apartment in the rue Chanoinesse for this lodger with a sick mind. Godefroid went there at once, and obtained from Madame de la Chanterie the address of a painter who, for a moderate sum, agreed to whiten the ceilings, clean the windows, paint the woodwork, and stain the floors, within a week. Godefroid took the measure of the rooms, intending to put the same carpet in all of them, — a green carpet of the cheapest kind. He wished for the plainest uniformity in this retreat, and Madame de la Chanterie approved of the idea. She calculated, with Manon's assistance, the number of yards of white calico required for the window curtains, and also for those of the modest iron bed; and she undertook to buy and have them made for a price so moderate as to surprise Godefroid. Having brought with him a certain amount of furniture, the whole cost of fitting up the rooms proved to be not over six hundred francs.

"We lead here," said Madame de la Chanterie, "a Christian life, which does not, as you know, accord with many superfluities; I think you have too many as it is."

In giving this hint to her future lodger, she looked at

a diamond which gleamed in the ring through which Godefroid's blue cravat was slipped.

"I only speak of this," she added, "because of the attention you expressed to abandon the frivolous life you complained of to Monsieur Mongenod."

Godefroid looked at Madame de la Chanterie as he listened to the harmonies of her limpid voice; he examined that face so purely white, resembling those of the cold, grave women of Holland whom the Flemish painters have so wonderfully reproduced with their smooth skins, in which a wrinkle is impossible.

"White and plump!" he said to himself, as he walked away; "but her hair is white, too."

Godefroid, like all weak natures, took readily to a new life, believing it satisfactory; and he was now quite eager to take up his abode in the rue Chanoinisse. Nevertheless, a prudent thought, or, if you prefer to say so, a distrustful thought, occurred to him. Two days before his installation, he went again to see Monsieur Mongenod to obtain some more definite information about the house he was to enter.

During the few moments he had spent in his future lodgings overlooking the changes that were being made in them, he had noticed the coming and going of several persons whose appearance and behavior, without being exactly mysterious, excited a belief that some secret occupation or profession was being carried on in

that house. At that particular period there was much talk of attempts by the elder branch of the Bourbons to recover the throne, and Godefroid suspected some conspiracy. When he found himself in the banker's counting-room held by the scrutinizing eye of Frédéric Mongenod while he made his inquiry, he felt ashamed as he saw a derisive smile on the lips of the listener.

“Madame la Baronne de la Chanterie,” replied the banker, “is one of the most obscure persons in Paris, but she is also one of the most honorable. Have you any object in asking for information?”

Godefroid retreated into generalities: he was going to live among strangers; he naturally wished to know something of those with whom he should be intimately thrown. But the banker's smile became more and more sarcastic; and Godefroid, more and more embarrassed, was ashamed of the step he had taken, and which bore no fruit, for he dared not continue his questions about Madame de la Chanterie and her inmates.

IV.

FAREWELL TO THE LIFE OF THE WORLD.

Two days later, of a Monday evening, having dined for the last time at the *Café Anglais*, and seen the two first pieces at the *Variétés*, he went, at ten o'clock, to sleep for the first time in the *rue Chanoinesse*, where *Manon* conducted him to his room.

Solitude has charms comparable only to those of savage life, which no European has ever really abandoned after once tasting them. This may seem strange at an epoch when every one lives so much to be seen of others that all the world concern themselves in their neighbors' affairs, and when private life will soon be a thing of the past, so bold and so intrusive are the eyes of the press, — that modern *Argus*. Nevertheless, it is a truth which rests on the authority of the first six Christian centuries, during which no recluse ever returned to social life. Few are the moral wounds that solitude will not heal.

So, at first, *Godefroid* was soothed by the deep peace and absolute stillness of his new abode, as a weary traveller is relaxed by a bath.

The very day after his arrival at Madame de la Chanterie's he was forced to examine himself, under the sense that he was separated from all, even from Paris, though he still lived in the shadow of its cathedral. Stripped of his social vanities, he was about to have no other witnesses of his acts than his own conscience and the inmates of that house. He had quitted the great high-road of the world to enter an unknown path. Where was that path to lead him? to what occupation should he now be drawn?

He had been for two hours absorbed in such reflections when Manon, the only servant of the house, knocked at his door to tell him that the second breakfast was served and the family were waiting for him. Twelve o'clock was striking. The new lodger went down at once, stirred by a wish to see and judge the five persons among whom his life was in future to be spent.

When he entered the room he found all the inmates of the house standing; they were dressed precisely as they were on the day when he came to make his first inquiries.

"Did you sleep well?" asked Madame de la Chanterie.

"So well that I did not wake up till ten o'clock," replied Godefroid, bowing to the four men, who returned the bow with gravity.

“We thought so,” said an old man named Alain, smiling.

“Manon spoke of a second breakfast,” said Godefroid; “but I fear that I have already broken some rule. At what hour do you rise?”

“Not quite so early as the old monks,” said Madame de la Chanterie, courteously, “but as early as the working-men, — six in winter, half-past three in summer. Our bed-time is ruled by that of the sun. We are always asleep by nine in winter and eleven in summer. On rising, we all take a little milk, which comes from our farm, after saying our prayers, except the Abbé de Vèze, who says the first mass, at six o’clock in summer and seven o’clock in winter, at Notre-Dame, where these gentlemen are present daily, as well as your humble servant.”

Madame de la Chanterie ended her explanation as the five lodgers took their seats at table.

The dining-room, painted throughout in gray, the design of the woodwork being in the style of Louis XIV., adjoined the sort of antechamber in which Manon was usually stationed, and it seemed to be parallel with Madame de la Chanterie’s bedroom, which also opened into the salon. This room had no other ornament than a tall clock. The furniture consisted of six chairs with oval backs covered with worsted-work, done probably by Madame de la Chanterie’s own hand, two buffets

and a table, all of mahogany, on which Manon did not lay a cloth for breakfast. The breakfast, of monastic frugality, was composed of a small turbot with a white sauce, potatoes, a salad, and four dishes of fruit, — peaches, grapes, strawberries, and fresh almonds; also, for relishes, honey in the comb (as in Switzerland), radishes, cucumbers, sardines, and butter, — the whole served in the well-known china with tiny blue flowers and green leaves on a white ground, which was no doubt a luxury in the days of Louis XIV., but had now, under the growing demands of luxury, come to be regarded as common.

“We keep the fasts,” said Monsieur Alain. “As we go to mass every morning, you will not be surprised to find us blindly following all the customs of the Church, even the severest.”

“And you shall begin by imitating us,” said Madame de la Chanterie, with a glance at Godefroid, whom she had placed beside her.

Of the five persons present Godefroid knew the names of three, — Madame de la Chanterie, the Abbé de Vèze, and Monsieur Alain. He wished to know those of the other two; but they kept silence and ate their food with the attention which recluses appear to give to every detail of a meal.

“Does this fine fruit come also from your farm, madame?” asked Godefroid.

"Yes, monsieur," she replied. "We have a little model farm, like the government itself; we call it our country house; it is twelve miles from here, on the road to Italy, near Villeneuve-Saint-Georges."

"It is a property that belongs to us all, and is to go to the survivor," said the goodman Alain.

"Oh, it is not very considerable!" added Madame de la Chanterie, rather hastily, as if she feared that Godefroid might think these remarks a bait.

"There are thirty acres of tilled land," said one of the two personages still unknown to Godefroid, "six of meadow, and an enclosure containing four acres, in which our house, which adjoins the farmhouse, stands."

"But such a property as that," said Godefroid, "must be worth a hundred thousand francs."

"Oh, we don't get anything out of it but our provisions!" said the same personage.

He was a tall, grave, spare man, with all the appearance of having served in the army. His white hair showed him to be past sixty, and his face betrayed some violent grief controlled by religion.

The second unnamed person, who seemed to be something between a master of rhetoric and a business agent, was of ordinary height, plump, but active withal. His face had the jovial expression which characterizes those of lawyers and notaries in Paris.

The dress of these four personages revealed a neatness due to the most scrupulous personal care. The same hand, and it was that of Manon, could be seen in every detail. Their coats were perhaps ten years old, but they were preserved, like the coats of vicars, by the occult power of the servant-woman, and the constant care with which they were worn. These men seemed to wear on their backs the livery of a system of life; they belonged to one thought, their looks said the same word, their faces breathed a gentle resignation, a provoking quietude.

“Is it an indiscretion, madame,” said Godefroid, “to ask the name of these gentlemen? I am ready to explain my life; can I know as much of theirs as custom will allow?”

“That gentleman,” said Madame de la Chanterie, motioning to the tall, thin man, “is Monsieur Nicolas; he is a colonel of gendarmerie, retired with the rank of brigadier-general. And this,” she added, looking towards the stout little man, “is a former councillor of the royal courts of Paris, who retired from the magistracy in 1830. His name is Monsieur Joseph. Though you have only been with us one day, I will tell you that in the world Monsieur Nicolas once bore the name of the Marquis de Montauran, and Monsieur Joseph that of Lecamus, Baron de Tresnes; but for us, as for the world, those names no longer exist. These gentlemen

are without heirs; they only advance by a little the oblivion which awaits their names; they are simply Monsieur Nicolas and Monsieur Joseph, as you will be Monsieur Godefroid."

As he heard those names, — one so celebrated in the annals of royalism by the catastrophe which put an end to the uprising of the Chouans; the other so revered in the halls of the old parliament of Paris, — Godefroid could not repress a quiver. He looked at these relics of the grandest things of the fallen monarchy, — the *noblesse* and the law, — and he could see no movement of the features, no change in the countenance, that revealed the presence of a worldly thought. Those men no longer remembered, or did not chose to remember, what they had been. This was Godefroid's first lesson.

"Each of your names, gentlemen, is a whole history in itself," he said respectfully.

"Yes, the history of my time, — ruins," replied Monsieur Joseph.

"You are in good company," said Monsieur Alain, smiling.

The latter can be described in a word: he was the small bourgeois of Paris, the worthy middle-class being with a kindly face, relieved by pure white hair, but made insipid by an eternal smile.

As for the priest, the Abbé de Vèze, his presence

said all. The priest who fulfils his mission is known by the first glance he gives you, and by the glance that others who know him give to him.

That which struck Godefroid most forcibly at first was the profound respect which the four lodgers manifested for Madame de la Chanterie. They all seemed, even the priest, in spite of the sacred character his functions gave him, to regard her as a queen. Godefroid also noticed their sobriety. Each seemed to eat only for nourishment. Madame de la Chanterie took, as did the rest, a single peach and half a bunch of grapes ; but she told her new lodger, as she offered him the various dishes, not to imitate such temperance.

Godefroid's curiosity was excited to the highest degree by this first entrance on his new life. When they returned to the salon after breakfast, he was left alone ; Madame de la Chanterie retired to the embrasure of a window and held a little private council with her four friends. This conference, entirely devoid of animation, lasted half an hour. They spoke together in a low voice, exchanging words which each of them appeared to have thought over. From time to time Monsieur Alain and Monsieur Joseph consulted a note-book, turning over its leaves.

"See the faubourg," said Madame de la Chanterie to Monsieur Joseph, who left the house.

That was the only word Godefroid distinguished.

“And you the Saint-Marceau quarter,” she continued, addressing Monsieur Nicolas. “Hunt through the faubourg Saint-Germain and see if you can find what we want;” this to the Abbé de Vèze, who went away immediately. “And you, my dear Alain,” she added, smiling at the latter, “make an examination. There, those important matters are all settled,” she said, returning to Godefroid.

She seated herself in her armchair, took a little piece of linen from the table before her, and began to sew as if she were employed to do so.

Godefroid, lost in conjecture, and still thinking of a royalist conspiracy, took his landlady’s remark as an opening, and he began to study her as he seated himself beside her. He was struck by the singular dexterity with which she worked. Although everything about her bespoke the great lady, she showed the dexterity of a workwoman; for every one can see at a glance, by certain manipulations, the work of a workman or an amateur.

“You do that,” said Godefroid, “as if you knew the trade.”

“Alas!” she answered, without raising her head, “I did know it once of necessity.”

Two large tears came into her eyes, and rolled down her cheeks to the linen in her hand.

“Forgive me, madame!” cried Godefroid.

Madame de la Chanterie looked at her new lodger, and saw such an expression of genuine regret upon his face, that she made him a friendly sign. After drying her eyes, she immediately recovered the calmness that characterized her face, which was less cold than chastened.

“ You are here, Monsieur Godefroid, — for you know already that we shall call you by your baptismal name, — you are here in the midst of ruins caused by a great tempest. We have each been struck and wounded in our hearts, our family interests, or our fortunes, by that whirlwind of forty years, which overthrew religion and royalty, and dispersed the elements of all that made old France. Words that seem quite harmless do sometimes wound us all, and that is why we are so silent. We speak rarely of ourselves ; we forget ourselves, and we have found a way to substitute another life for our lives. It is because, after hearing your confidence at Monsieur Mongenod’s, I thought there seemed a likeness between your situation and ours, that I induced my four friends to receive you among us ; besides, we wanted another monk in our convent. But what are you going to do? No one can face solitude without some moral resources.”

“ Madame, I should be very glad, after hearing what you have said, if you yourself would be the guide of my destiny.”

“You speak like a man of the world,” she answered, “and are trying to flatter me, — a woman of sixty! My dear child,” she went on, “let me tell you that you are here among persons who believe strongly in God; who have all felt his hand, and have yielded themselves to him almost as though they were Trappists. Have you ever remarked the profound sense of safety in a true priest when he has given himself to the Lord, when he listens to his voice, and strives to make himself a docile instrument in the hand of Providence? He has no longer vanity or self-love, — nothing of all that which wounds continually the hearts of the world. His quietude is equal to that of the fatalist; his resignation does truly enable him to bear all. The true priest, such a one as the Abbé de Vèze, lives like a child with its mother; for the Church, my dear Monsieur Godefroid, is a good mother. Well, a man can be a priest without the tonsure; all priests are not in orders. To vow one’s self to good, that is imitating a true priest; it is obedience to God. I am not preaching to you; I am not trying to convert you; I am explaining our lives to you.”

“Instruct me, madame,” said Godefroid, deeply impressed, “so that I may not fail in any of your rules.”

“That would be hard upon you; you will learn them by degrees. Never speak here of your misfortunes; they are slight compared to the catastrophes by which the lives of those you are now among were blasted.”

While speaking thus, Madame de la Chanterie drew her needle and set her stitches with unbroken regularity ; but here she paused, raised her head, and looked at Godefroid. She saw him charmed by the penetrating sweetness of her voice, which possessed, let us say it here, an apostolic unction. The sick soul contemplated with admiration the truly extraordinary phenomenon presented by this woman, whose face was now resplendent. Rosy tints were spreading on the waxen cheeks, her eyes shone, the youthfulness of her soul changed the light wrinkles into gracious lines, and all about her solicited affection. Godefroid in that one moment measured the gulf that separated this woman from common sentiments. He saw her inaccessible on a peak to which religion had led her ; and he was still too worldly not to be keenly piqued, and to long to plunge through the gulf and up to the summit on which she stood, and stand beside her. Giving himself up to this desire, he related to her all the mistakes of his life, and much that he could not tell at Mongenod's, where his confidence had been confined to his actual situation.

“ Poor child ! ”

That exclamation, falling now and then from Madame de la Chanterie's lips as he went on, dropped like balm upon the heart of the sufferer.

“ What can I substitute for so many hopes betrayed,

so much affection wasted?" he asked, looking at his hostess, who had now grown thoughtful. "I came here," he resumed, "to reflect and choose a course of action. I have lost my mother; will you replace her?"

"Will you," she said, "show a son's obedience?"

"Yes, if you will have the tenderness that commands it."

"I will try," she said.

Godefroid put out his hand to take that of his hostess, who gave it to him, guessing his intentions. He carried it respectfully to his lips. Madame de la Chanterie's hand was exquisitely beautiful, — without a wrinkle; neither fat nor thin; white enough to be the envy of all young women, and shapely enough for the model of a sculptor. Godefroid had already admired those hands, conscious of their harmony with the spell of her voice, and the celestial blue of her glance.

"Wait a moment," said Madame de la Chanterie, rising and going into her own room.

Godefroid was keenly excited; he did not know to what class of ideas her movement was to be attributed. His perplexity did not last long, for she presently returned with a book in her hand.

"Here, my dear child," she said, "are the prescriptions of a great physician of souls. When the things of ordinary life have not given us the happiness we expected of them, we must seek for happiness in a

higher life. Here is the key of a new world. Read night and morning a chapter of this book ; but bring your full attention to bear on what you read ; study the words as you would a foreign language. At the end of a month you will be another man. It is now twenty years that I have read a chapter every day ; and my three friends, Messieurs Nicolas, Alain, and Joseph, would no more fail in that practice than they would fail in getting up and going to bed. Do as they do for love of God, for love of me," she said, with a divine serenity, an august confidence.

Godefroid turned over the book and read upon its back in gilt letters, IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST. The simplicity of this old woman, her youthful candor, her certainty of doing a good deed, confounded the ex-dandy. Madame de la Chanterie's face wore a rapturous expression, and her attitude was that of a woman who was offering a hundred thousand francs to a merchant on the verge of bankruptcy.

"I have used that volume," she said, "for twenty-six years. God grant its touch may be contagious. Go now and buy me another copy ; for this is the hour when persons come here who must not be seen."

Godefroid bowed and went to his room, where he flung the book upon the table, exclaiming, —

"Poor, good woman ! Well, so be it !"

V.

THE INFLUENCE OF BOOKS.

THE book, like all books frequently read, opened in a particular place. Godefroid sat down as if to put his ideas in order, for he had gone through more emotion during this one morning than he had often done in the agitated months of his life ; but above all, his curiosity was keenly excited. Letting his eyes fall by chance, as people will when their souls are launched in meditation, they rested mechanically on the two open pages of the book ; almost unconsciously he read the following heading : —

CHAPTER XII.

THE ROYAL WAY OF THE HOLY CROSS.

He took up the book ; a sentence of that noble chapter caught his eye like a flash of light : —

“He has walked before thee, bearing his cross ; he died for thee, that thou mightest bear thy cross, and be glad to die upon it.

“Go where thou wilt, seek what thou wilt, never canst thou find a nobler, surer path than the royal way of the holy cross.

“Dispose and order all things according to thy desires and thine own judgment and still thou shalt find trials to suffer, whether thou wilt or no; and so the cross is there, be it pain of body or pain of mind.

“Sometimes God will seem to leave thee, sometimes men will harass thee. But, far worse, thou wilt find thyself a burden to thyself, and no remedy will deliver thee, no consolation comfort thee: until it pleases God to end thy trouble thou must bear it; for it is God’s will that we suffer without consolation, that we may go to him without one backward look, humble through tribulation.”

“What a strange book!” thought Godefroid, turning over the leaves. Then his eyes lighted on the following words:—

“When thou hast reached the height of finding all afflictions sweet, since they have made thee love the love of Jesus Christ, then know thyself happy; for thou hast found thy paradise in this world.”

Annoyed by this simplicity (the characteristic of strength), angry at being foiled by a book, he closed the volume; but even then he saw, in letters of gold on the green morocco cover, the words:—

SEEK THAT WHICH IS ETERNAL, AND THAT ONLY.

“Have they found it here?” he asked himself.

He went out to buy the handsomest copy he could find of the “Imitation of Jesus Christ” thinking that Madame de la Chanterie would wish to read her

chapter that night. When he reached the street he stood a moment near the door, uncertain which way to take and debating in what direction he was likely to find a bookseller. As he stood there he heard the heavy sound of the massive porte-cochère closing.

Two men were leaving the hôtel de la Chanterie. If the reader has fully understood the character of this old house he will know that it was one of the ancient mansions of the olden time. Manon, herself, when she called Godefroid that morning, had asked him, smiling, how he had slept in the hôtel de la Chanterie.

Godefroid followed the two men without the slightest intention of watching them; they took him for an accidental passer, and spoke in tones which enabled him to hear them distinctly in those lonely streets.

The two men passed along the rue Massillon beside the church and crossed the open space in front of it.

“ Well, you see, old man, it is easy enough to catch their sous. Say what they want you to say, that’s all.”

“ But we owe money.”

“ To whom? ”

“ To that lady — ”

“ I’d like to see that old body try to get it; I’d — ”

“ You’d pay her.”

“ Well, you’re right, for if I paid her I’d get more another time.”

"Wouldn't it be better to do as they advise, and build up a good business?"

"Pooh!"

"But she said she would get some one to lend us the money."

"Then we should have to give up the life of —"

"Well, I'd rather; I'm sick of it; it is n't being a man at all to be drunk half one's time."

"Yes, but you know the abbé turned his back on old Marin the other day; he refused him everything."

"Because old Marin tried to swindle, and nobody can succeed in that but millionnaires."

Just then the two men, whose dress seemed to show that they were foremen in some workshop, turned abruptly round towards the place Maubert by the bridge of the Hôtel-Dieu. Godefroid stepped aside to let them pass. Seeing him so close behind them they looked rather anxiously at each other, and their faces expressed a regret for having spoken.

Godefroid was the more interested by this conversation because it reminded him of the scene between the Abbé de Vèze and the workman the day of his first visit.

Thinking over this circumstance, he went as far as a bookseller's in the rue Saint-Jacques, whence he returned with a very handsome copy of the finest edition published in France of the "Imitation of Jesus

Christ." Walking slowly back, in order that he might arrive exactly at the dinner hour, he recalled his own sensations during this morning and he was conscious of a new impulse in his soul. He was seized by a sudden and deep curiosity, but his curiosity paled before an inexplicable desire. He was drawn to Madame de la Chanterie; he felt the keenest desire to attach himself to her, to devote himself to her, to please her, to deserve her praise: in short, he felt the first emotions of platonic love; he saw glimpses of the untold grandeur of that soul, and he longed to know it in its entirety. He grew impatient to enter the inner lives of these pure Catholics. In that small company of faithful souls, the majesty of practical religion was so thoroughly blended with all that is most majestic in a French woman that Godefroid resolved to leave no stone unturned to make himself accepted as a true member of the little body. These feelings would have been unnaturally sudden in a busy Parisian eagerly occupied with life, but Godefroid was, as we have seen, in the position of a drowning man who catches at every floating branch thinking it a solid stay, and his soul, ploughed and furrowed with trial, was ready to receive all seed.

He found the four friends in the salon, and he presented the book to Madame de la Chanterie, saying:

"I did not like to deprive you of it to-night."

"God grant," she said, smiling, as she looked at the

magnificent volume, "that this may be your last excess of elegance."

Looking at the clothes of the four men present and observing how in every particular they were reduced to mere utility and neatness, and seeing, too, how rigorously the same principle was applied to all the details of the house, Godefroid understood the value of the reproach so courteously made to him.

"Madame," he said, "the persons whom you obliged this morning are scoundrels; I overheard, without intending it, what they said to each other when they left the house; it was full of the basest ingratitude."

"They were the two locksmiths of the rue Mouffetard," said Madame de la Chanterie to Monsieur Nicolas; "that is your affair."

"The fish gets away more than once before it is caught," said Monsieur Alain, laughing.

The perfect indifference of Madame de la Chanterie on hearing of the immediate ingratitude of persons to whom she had, no doubt, given money, surprised Godefroid, who became thoughtful.

The dinner was enlivened by Monsieur Alain and Monsieur Joseph; but Monsieur Nicolas remained quiet, sad, and cold; he bore on his features the ineffaceable imprint of some bitter grief, some eternal sorrow. Madame de la Chanterie paid equal attentions to all. Godefroid felt himself observed by these persons, whose

prudence equalled their piety; his vanity led him to imitate their reserve, and he measured his words.

This first day was much more interesting than those which succeeded it. Godefroid, who found himself set aside from all the serious conferences, was obliged, during several hours in mornings and evenings when he was left wholly to himself, to have recourse to the "Imitation of Jesus Christ;" and he ended by studying that book as a man studies a book when he has but one, or is a prisoner. A book is then like a woman with whom we live in solitude; we must either hate or adore that woman, and, in like manner, we must either enter into the soul of the author or not read ten lines of his book.

Now, it is impossible not to be impressed by the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," which is to dogma what action is to thought. Catholicism vibrates in it, pulses, breathes, and lives, body to body, with human life. The book is a sure friend. It speaks to all passions, all difficulties, even worldly ones; it solves all problems; it is more eloquent than any preacher, for its voice is your own, it is the voice within your soul, you hear it with your spirit. It is, in short, the Gospel translated, adapted to all ages, the summit and crest of all human situations. It is extraordinary that the Church has never canonized John Gersen, for the Divine Spirit evidently inspired his pen.

For Godefroid, the hôtel de la Chanterie now held a woman and a book ; day by day he loved the woman more ; he discovered flowers buried beneath the snows of winter in her heart ; he had glimpses of the joys of a sacred friendship which religion permits, on which the angels smile ; a friendship which here united these five persons and against which no evil could prevail.

This is a sentiment higher than all others ; a love of soul to soul, resembling those rarest flowers born on the highest peaks of earth ; a love of which a few examples are offered to humanity from age to age, by which lovers are sometimes bound together in one being, and which explains those faithful attachments which are otherwise inexplicable by the laws of the world. It is a bond without disappointment, without misunderstandings, without vanity, without strife, without even contradictions ; so completely are the moral natures blended into one.

This sentiment, vast, infinite, born of catholic charity, Godefroid foresaw with all its joys. At times he could not believe the spectacle before his eyes, and he sought for reasons to explain the sublime friendship of these five persons, wondering in his heart to find true Catholics, true Christians of the early Church, in the Paris of 1835.

VI.

THE BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE OF CHANTERIE AND
COMPANY.

WITHIN a week after his arrival Godefroid had seen such a concourse of persons, he had overheard fragments of conversation relating to so many serious topics, that he began to perceive an enormous activity in the lives of the five inmates of the house. He noticed that none of them slept more than five hours at the most.

They had all made, in some sort, a first day, before the second breakfast. During that time strangers came and went, bringing or carrying away money, sometimes in considerable sums. A messenger from the Mongenod counting-room often came, — always very early in the morning, so that his errand might not interfere with the business of the bank.

One evening Monsieur Mongenod came himself, and Godefroid noticed that he showed to Monsieur Alain a certain filial familiarity added to the profound respect which he testified to the three other lodgers of Madame de la Chanterie.

On that evening the banker merely put a few matter-of-fact questions to Godefroid: "Was he comfortable? Did he intend to stay?" etc., — at the same time advising him to persevere in his plan.

"I need only one thing to make me contented," said Godefroid.

"What is that?" asked the banker.

"An occupation."

"An occupation!" remarked the Abbé de Vèze. "Then you have changed your mind? I thought you came to our cloister for rest."

"Rest, without the prayers that enlivened monasteries, without the meditation which peopled the Thebaïds, becomes a disease," said Monsieur Joseph, sententiously.

"Learn book-keeping," said Monsieur Mongenod, with a smile; "you might become in a few months very useful to my friends here."

"Oh! with pleasure," cried Godefroid.

The next day was Sunday; Madame de la Chanterie requested him to give her his arm to high mass.

"It is," she said, "the only coercion I shall put upon you. Several times during the past week I have wished to speak to you of religion, but it did not seem to me that the time had come. . You would find plenty of occupation if you shared our beliefs, for then you would share our labors as well."

During mass Godefroid noticed the fervor of Messieurs Nicolas, Joseph, and Alain; and as during the last few days he had also noticed their superiority and intelligence, and the vast extent of their knowledge, he concluded, when he saw how they humbled themselves, that the Catholic religion had secrets which had hitherto escaped him.

"After all," he said to himself, "it is the religion of Bossuet, Pascal, Racine, Saint-Louis, Louis XIV., Raffaele, Michel-Angelo, Ximenes, Bayard, du Guesclin; and how could I, weakling that I am, compare myself to those intellects, those statesmen, those poets, those heroes?"

If there were not some real instruction in these minor details it would be imprudent to dwell upon them in these days; but they are indispensable to the interests of this history, in which the present public will be none too ready to believe, and which presents at the outset a fact that is almost ridiculous, — namely, the empire which a woman of sixty obtained over a young man disappointed with the world.

"You did not pray at all," said Madame de la Chanterie to Godefroid as they left the portal of Notre-Dame; "not for any one, — not even for the soul of your mother."

Godefroid colored and said nothing.

"Will you do me the favor," continued Madame de

la Chanterie, "to go to your room and not come into the salon for an hour? You can meditate, if you love me, on the first chapter in the third book of the 'Imitation' — the one entitled: 'Of inward communing.'"

Godefroid bowed stiffly and went to his room.

"The devil take them!" he exclaimed to himself, giving way to downright anger. "What do they want with me here? What is all this traffic they are carrying on? Pooh! all women, even pious ones, are up to the same tricks. If Madame" (giving her the name by which her lodgers spoke of her) "wants me out of the way it is because they are plotting something against me."

With that thought in his mind he tried to look from his window into that of the salon; but the situation of the rooms did not allow it. He went down one flight, and then returned, — reflecting that according to the rigid principles of the house he should be dismissed if discovered spying. To lose the respect of those five persons seemed to him as serious as public dishonor.

He waited three quarters of an hour; then he resolved to surprise Madame de la Chanterie and come upon her suddenly before she expected him. He invented a lie to excuse himself, saying that his watch was wrong; for which purpose he set it on twenty minutes. Then he went downstairs, making no noise, reached the door of the salon, and opened it abruptly.

He saw a man, still young, but already celebrated, a poet, whom he had frequently met in society, Victor de Vernisset, on his knees before Madame de la Chanterie, and kissing the hem of her dress. If the sky had fallen, and shivered to atoms like glass, as the ancients thought it was, Godefroid could not have been more astonished. Shocking thoughts came into his mind, and then a reaction more terrible still when, before the sarcasm he was about to utter had left his lips, he saw Monsieur Alain in a corner of the room counting out bank-notes.

In an instant Vernisset was on his feet, and the worthy Alain looked thunderstruck. Madame de la Chanterie, on her part, gave Godefroid a look which petrified him; for the twofold expression on the face of the visitor had not escaped him.

“Monsieur is one of us,” she said to the young poet, with a sign towards Godefroid.

“Then you are a happy man, my dear fellow,” said Vernisset; “you are saved! But, madame,” he added, turning to Madame de la Chanterie, “if all Paris had seen me, I should rejoice in it. Nothing can ever mark my gratitude to you. I am yours forever; I belong to you utterly. Command me as you will and I obey. I owe you my life, and it is yours.”

“Well, well, young man!” said the kind Alain, “then be wise, be virtuous, — only, *work*; but do not

attack religion in your books. Moreover, remember that you owe a debt."

And he handed him an envelope thick with the bank-notes he had counted out. The tears were in Victor de Vernisset's eyes; he kissed Madame de la Chanterie's hand respectfully and went away, after shaking hands with Monsieur Alain and Godefroid.

"You have not obeyed madame," said the goodman Alain solemnly, with a sad expression on his face that Godefroid had never before seen there; "and that is a great wrong; if it happens again we must part. This may seem hard to you after we had begun to give you our confidence."

"My dear Alain," said Madame de la Chanterie, "have the kindness for my sake to say no more about this piece of thoughtlessness. We ought not to ask too much of a new arrival, who has been spared great misfortunes and knows nothing of religion; and who, moreover, has only an excessive curiosity about our vocation, and does not yet believe in us."

"Forgive me, madame," said Godefroid; "I do desire, from this time forth, to be worthy of you. I will submit to any trial you think necessary before initiating me into the secrets of your work; and if the Abbé de Vèze will undertake to instruct me I will listen to him, soul and mind."

These words made Madame de la Chanterie so happy

that a faint color stole upon her cheeks. She took Godefroid's hand and pressed it, then she said, with strange emotion, "It is well."

That evening, after dinner, visitors came in : a vicar-general of the diocese of Paris, two canons, two former mayors of Paris, and one of the ladies who distributed the charities of Notre-Dame. No cards were played ; but the conversation was gay, without being vapid.

A visit which surprised Godefroid greatly was that of the Comtesse de Cinq-Cygne, one of the highest personages in aristocratic society, whose salon was inaccessible to the bourgeoisie and to parvenus. The presence of this great lady in Madame de la Chanterie's salon was sufficiently surprising ; but the manner in which the two women met and treated each other seemed to Godefroid inexplicable ; for it showed the closest intimacy and a constant intercourse which gave Madame de la Chanterie an added value in his eyes. Madame de Cinq-Cygne was gracious and affectionate in manner to the four friends of her friend, and showed the utmost respect to Monsieur Nicolas.

We may see here how social vanities still governed Godefroid ; for up to this visit of Madame de Cinq-Cygne he was still undecided ; but he now resolved to give himself up, with or without conviction, to whatever Madame de la Chanterie and her friends might exact of him, in order to get affiliated with their order and ini-

tiated into their secrets, assuring himself that in that way he should find a career.

The next day he went to a book-keeper whom Madame de la Chanterie recommended, and arranged with him the hours at which they should work together. His whole time was now employed. The Abbé de Vèze instructed him in the mornings; he was two hours a day with the book-keeper; and he spent the rest of his time between breakfast and dinner in doing imaginary commercial accounts which his master required him to write at home.

Some time passed thus, during which Godefroid felt the charm of a life in which each hour has its own employment. The recurrence of a settled work at settled moments, regularity of action, is the secret of many a happy life; and it proves how deeply the founders of religious orders had meditated on the nature of man. Godefroid, who had made up his mind to listen to the Abbé de Vèze, began to have serious thoughts of a future life, and to find how little he knew of the real gravity of religious questions.

Moreover, from day to day Madame de la Chanterie, with whom he always remained for an hour after the second breakfast, allowed him to discover the treasures that were in her; he knew then that he never could have imagined a loving-kindness so broad and so complete. A woman of Madame de la Chanterie's apparent

age no longer has the pettiness of younger women. She is a friend who offers you all feminine refinements, who displays the graces, the choice attractions which nature inspires in a woman for man; she gives them, and no longer sells them. Such a woman is either detestable or perfect; for her gifts are either not of the flesh or they are worthless. Madame de la Chanterie was perfect. She seemed never to have had a youth; her glance never told of a past. Godefroid's curiosity was far from being appeased by a closer and more intimate knowledge of this sublime nature; the discoveries of each succeeding day only redoubled his desire to learn the anterior life of a woman whom he now thought a saint. Had she ever loved? Had she been a wife, — a mother? Nothing about her was characteristic of an old maid; she displayed all the graces of a well-born woman; and an observer would perceive in her robust health, in the extraordinary phenomena of her physical preservation, a divine life, and a species of ignorance of the earthly existence.

Except the gay and cheery goodman Alain, all these persons had suffered; but Monsieur Nicolas himself seemed to give the palm of martyrdom to Madame de la Chanterie. Nevertheless, the memory of her sorrows was so restrained by religious resignation, by her secret invocations, that she seemed to have been always happy.

“You are the life of your friends,” Godefroid said to her one day; “you are the tie that unites them, — the house-mother, as it were, of some great work; and, as we are all mortal, I ask myself sometimes what your association would become without you.”

“That is what frightens the others; but Providence, to whom we owe our new book-keeper,” she said, smiling, “will provide. Besides, I am on the look-out.”

“Will your new book-keeper soon be allowed to work at your business?” asked Godefroid.

“That depends on himself,” she answered, smiling. “He must be sincerely religious, truly pious, without the least self-interest, not concerned about the riches of our house, able to rise above all petty social considerations on the two wings which God has given us.”

“What are they?”

“Singleness of mind and purity,” replied Madame de la Chanterie. “Your ignorance shows me that you have neglected the reading of our book,” she added, laughing at the innocent trick she had played to know if Godefroid had read the “Imitation of Jesus Christ.” “And, lastly,” she went on, “fill your soul with Saint Paul’s epistle upon Charity. When that is done,” she added, with a sublime look, “it will not be you who belong to us, we shall belong to you, and you will be able to count up greater riches than the sovereigns of this world possess; you will enjoy as we enjoy; yes,

let me tell you (if you remember the ‘Arabian Nights’) that the treasures of Aladdin are nothing to those we possess. And so for the last year we have not sufficed for our affairs, and we needed, as you see, a book-keeper.”

While speaking, she studied Godefroid’s face ; he, on his part, did not know how to take this extraordinary confidence. But as the scene in the counting-room at Mongenod’s came often to his mind, he hovered between doubt and belief.

“Ah, you will be very happy !” she said.

Godefroid was so consumed with curiosity that from this moment he determined to break through the reserve of one of the four friends and question him. Now, the one to whom he felt the most drawn, and who seemed naturally to excite the sympathies of persons of all classes, was the kind, gay, simple Monsieur Alain. By what strange path could Providence have led a being so guileless into this monastery without a lock, where recluses of both sexes lived beneath a rule in the midst of Paris, in absolute freedom, as though they were guarded by the sternest of superiors ? What drama, what event, had made him leave his own road in life, and take this path among the sorrows of the great city ?

Godefroid resolved to ask.

VII.

MONSIEUR ALAIN TELLS HIS SECRETS.

ONE evening Godefroid determined to pay a visit to his neighbor on the floor above him, with the intention of satisfying a curiosity more excited by the apparent impossibility of a catastrophe in such an existence than it would have been under the expectation of discovering some terrible episode in the life of a corsair.

At the words "Come in!" given in answer to two raps struck discreetly on the door, Godefroid turned the key which was in the lock and found Monsieur Alain sitting by the fire reading, before he went to bed, his accustomed chapter in the "Imitation of Jesus Christ," by the light of two wax-candles, each protected by a movable green shade, such as whist-players use.

The goodman wore trousers *à pied* and his gray camlet dressing-gown. His feet were at a level with the fire, resting on a cushion done in worsted-work, as were his slippers, by Madame de la Chanterie. The fine head of the old man, without other covering than its crown of white hair, almost like that of a monk, stood

out in clear relief against the brown background of an enormous armchair.

Monsieur Alain gently laid his book, which was much worn at the corners, on a little table with twisted legs, and signed to the young man to take another chair, removing as he did so a pair of spectacles which were hanging on the end of his nose.

"Are you ill, that you have left your room at this hour?" he asked.

"Dear Monsieur Alain," said Godefroid, frankly, "I am tortured with a curiosity which one word from you will make very harmless or very indiscreet; and that explains clearly enough the spirit in which I shall ask my question."

"Oh! oh! and what is your question?" said the good soul, looking at the young man with an eye that was half mischievous.

"What was it that brought you to lead the life that you live here? For, surely, to accept the doctrine of such total renunciation of all personal interests, a man must have been disgusted with the world, or else have injured others."

"Eh! my dear lad," replied the old man, letting a smile flicker on his large lips, which gave to his rosy mouth the kindest expression that the genius of a painter ever imagined, "can we not be moved to the deepest pity by the spectacle of human wretchedness

which Paris holds within her walls? Did Saint Vincent de Paul need the spur of remorse or wounded vanity to make him devote himself to outcast children?"

"You close my mouth, for if ever a soul resembled that of the Christian hero, it is yours," said Godefroid.

In spite of the hardness which age had given to the wrinkled yellow skin of his face, the old man blushed, for he seemed to have provoked that comparison; though any one who knew his modesty would have been certain he never dreamed of it. Godefroid was aware by this time that Madame de la Chanterie's inmates had no taste for that sort of incense. Nevertheless, the extreme simplicity of the good old soul was more disturbed by this idea than a young girl would have been by an improper thought.

"Though I am very far indeed from Saint Vincent de Paul morally," said Monsieur Alain, "I think I do resemble him physically."

Godefroid was about to speak, but was stopped by a gesture of the old man, whose nose, it must be owned, had the tuberous appearance of that of the Saint, and whose face, a good deal like that of an old vine-dresser, was an exact duplicate of the broad, common face of the founder of Foundling hospitals.

"As for me, you are right enough," he went on; "my vocation for our work was brought about by repentance, as the result of a — folly."

“A folly, — you!” Godefroid exclaimed softly, the word entirely putting out of his head what he meant to say.

“Ah! dear me, what I am going to tell you will seem, I dare say, a trifle to you, — a mere bit of nonsense; but before the tribunal of conscience it was another thing. If you persist in wishing to share our work after hearing what I shall tell you, you will understand that the power of a sentiment is according to the nature of souls, and that a matter which would not in the least trouble a strong mind may very well torment the conscience of a weak Christian.”

After a preface of this kind, the curiosity of the disciple of course knew no bounds. What could be the crime of the worthy soul whom Madame de la Chanterie called her *paschal lamb*? The thought crossed Godefroid’s mind that a book might be written on it, called “The Sins of a Sheep.” Sheep are sometimes quite ferocious towards grass and flowers. One of the tenderest republicans of those days was heard to assert that the best of human beings was cruel to something. But the kindly old Alain! — he, who like my uncle Toby, would n’t crush a gnat till it had stung him twenty times, — that sweet soul to have been tortured by repentance!

This reflection in Godefroid’s mind filled the pause made by the old man after saying, “Now listen to

me!" — a pause he filled himself by pushing his cushion under Godefroid's feet to share it with him.

"I was then about thirty years of age," he said. "It was the year '98, if I remember right, — a period when young men were forced to have the experience of men of sixty. One morning, a little before my breakfast hour, which was nine o'clock, my old housekeeper ushered in one of the few friends remaining to me after the Revolution. My first word was to ask him to breakfast. My friend — his name was Mongenod, a fellow about twenty-eight years of age — accepted, but he did so in an awkward manner. I had not seen him since 1793."

"Mongenod!" cried Godefroid; "why, that is —"

"If you want to know the end before the beginning, how am I to tell you my history?" said the old man, smiling.

Godefroid made a sign which promised absolute silence.

"When Mongenod sat down," continued Monsieur Alain, "I noticed that his shoes were worn out. His stockings had been washed so often that it was difficult to say if they were silk or not. His breeches, of apricot-colored cassimere, were so old that the color had disappeared in spots; and the buckles, instead of being of steel, seemed to me to be made of common iron. His white, flowered waistcoat, now yellow from

long wearing, also his shirt, the frill of which was frayed, betrayed a horrible yet decent poverty. A mere glance at his coat was enough to convince me that my friend had fallen into dire distress. That coat was nut-brown in color, threadbare at the seams, carefully brushed, though the collar was greasy from pomade or powder, and had white metal buttons now copper-colored. The whole was so shabby that I tried not to look at it. The hat — an opera hat of a kind we then carried under the arm, and not on the head — had seen many governments. Nevertheless, my poor friend must have spent a few sous at the barber's, for he was neatly shaved; and his hair, gathered behind his head with a comb and powdered carefully, smelt of pomade. I saw two chains hanging down on his breeches, — two rusty steel chains, — but no appearance of a watch in his pocket. I tell you all these details, as they come to me," said Monsieur Alain; "I seldom think of this matter now; but when I do, all the particulars come vividly before me."

He paused a moment and then resumed: —

"It was winter, and Mongenod evidently had no cloak; for I noticed that several lumps of snow, which must have dropped from the roofs as he walked along, were sticking to the collar of his coat. When he took off his rabbit-skin gloves, and I saw his right hand, I noticed the signs of labor, and toilsome labor, too.

Now his father, the advocate of the Grand Council, had left him some property,—about five or six thousand francs a year. I saw at once that he had come to me to borrow money. I had, in a secret hiding-place, two hundred louis d'or,—an enormous hoard at that time; for they were worth I couldn't now tell you how many hundred thousand francs in assignats. Mongenod and I had studied in the same college,—that of Grassins,—and we had met again in the same law-office,—that of Bordin,—a truly honest man. When you have spent your boyhood and played your youthful pranks with the same comrade, the sympathy between you and him has something sacred about it; his voice, his glance, stir certain chords in your heart which only vibrate under the memories that he brings back. Even if you have had cause of complaint against such a comrade, the rights of the friendship between you can never be effaced. But there had never been the slightest jar between us two. At the death of his father, in 1787, Mongenod was left richer than I. Though I had never borrowed money from him, I owed him pleasures which my father's economy denied me. Without my generous comrade I should never have seen the first representation of the 'Marriage of Figaro.' Mongenod was what was called in those days a charming cavalier; he was very gallant. Sometimes I blamed him for his facile way of making inti-

macies and his too great amiability. His purse opened freely ; he lived in a free-handed way ; he would serve a man as second having only seen him twice. Good God ! how you send me back to the days and the ways of my youth !” said the worthy man, with his cheery smile.

“ Are you sorry ?” said Godefroid.

“ Oh, no ! and you can judge by the minuteness with which I am telling you all this how great a place this event has held in my life.

“ Mongenod, endowed with an excellent heart and fine courage, a trifle Voltairean, was inclined to play the nobleman,” went on Monsieur Alain. “ His education at Grassins, where there were many young nobles, and his various gallantries, had given him the polished manners and ways of people of condition, who were then called aristocrats. You can therefore imagine how great was my surprise to see such symptoms of poverty in the young and elegant Mongenod of 1787 when my eyes left his face and rested on his garments. But as, at that unhappy period of our history, some persons assumed a shabby exterior for safety, and as he might have had some other and sufficient reasons for disguising himself, I awaited an explanation, although I opened the way to it. ‘ What a plight you are in, my dear Mongenod !’ I said, accepting the pinch of snuff he offered me from a copper and zinc snuff-box. ‘ Sad

indeed!’ he answered; ‘I have but one friend left, and that is you. I have done all I could to avoid appealing to you; but I must ask you for a hundred louis. The sum is large, I know,’ he went on, seeing my surprise; ‘but if you gave me fifty I should be unable ever to return them; whereas with one hundred I can seek my fortune in better ways,—despair will inspire me to find them.’ ‘Then you have nothing?’ I exclaimed. ‘I have,’ he said, brushing away a tear, ‘five sous left of my last piece of money. To come here to you I have had my boots blacked and my face shaved. I possess what I have on my back. But,’ he added, with a gesture, ‘I owe my landlady a thousand francs in assignats, and the man I buy cold victuals from refused me credit yesterday. I am absolutely without resources.’ ‘What do you think of doing?’ ‘Enlisting as a soldier if you cannot help me.’ ‘You! a soldier, Mongenod?’ ‘I will get myself killed, or I will be General Mongenod.’ ‘Well,’ I said, much moved, ‘eat your breakfast in peace; I have a hundred louis.’

“At that point,” said the goodman, interrupting himself and looking at Godefroid with a shrewd air, “I thought it best to tell him a bit of a fib.”

“‘That is all I possess in the world,’ I said. ‘I have been waiting for a fall in the Funds to invest that money; but I will put it in your hands instead, and you

shall consider me your partner; I will leave to your conscience the duty of returning it to me in due time. The conscience of an honest man,' I said, 'is a better security than the Funds.' Mongenod looked at me fixedly as I spoke, and seemed to be inlaying my words upon his heart. He put out his right hand, I laid my left into it, and we held them together, — I deeply moved, and he with two big tears rolling down his cheeks. The sight of those tears wrung my heart. I was more moved still when Mongenod pulled out a ragged foulard handkerchief to wipe them away. 'Wait here,' I said; and I went to my secret hiding-place with a heart as agitated as though I had heard a woman say she loved me. I came back with two rolls of fifty louis each. 'Here, count them.' He would not count them; and he looked about him for a desk on which to write, he said, a proper receipt. I positively refused to take any paper. 'If I should die,' I said, 'my heirs would trouble you. This is to be between ourselves.'

"Well," continued Monsieur Alain, smiling, "when Mongenod found me a good friend he ceased to look as sad and anxious as when he entered; in fact, he became quite gay. My housekeeper gave us some oysters, white wine, and an omelet, with broiled kidneys, and the remains of a pâté my old mother had sent me; also some dessert, coffee, and liqueur of the îles. Mongenod, who had been starving for two days, was fed up.

We were so interested in talking about our life before the Revolution that we sat at table till three in the afternoon. Mongenod told me how he had lost his fortune. In the first place, his father having invested the greater part of his capital in city loans, when they fell Mongenod lost two thirds of all he had. Then, having sold his house in the rue de Savoie, he was forced to receive the price in assignats. After that he took it into his head to found a newspaper, 'La Sentinelle;' that compelled him to fly at the end of six months. His hopes, he said, were now fixed on the success of a comic opera called 'Les Péruviens.' When he said that I began to tremble. Mongenod turned author, wasting his money on a newspaper, living no doubt in the theatres, connected with singers at the Feydeau, with musicians, and all the queer people who lurk behind the scenes, — to tell you the truth, he didn't seem my Mongenod. I trembled. But how could I take back my hundred louis? I saw each roll in each pocket of his breeches like the barrels of two pistols.

"Then," continued Monsieur Alain, and this time he sighed, "Mongenod went away. When I was alone, and no longer in presence of hard and cruel poverty, I began, in spite of myself, to reflect. I was sobered. 'Mongenod,' thought I, 'is perhaps thoroughly depraved; he may have been playing a comedy at my

expense.' His gayety, the moment I had handed over to him readily such a large sum of money, struck me then as being too like the joy of the valets on the stage when they catch a *Géronte*. I ended, where I ought to have begun, by resolving to make some investigations as to my friend Mongenod, who had given me his address, — written on the back of a playing card! I did not choose, as a matter of delicacy, to go and see him the next day; he might have thought there was distrust in such promptness, as, indeed, there would have been. The second day I had certain matters to attend to which took all my time, and it was only at the end of two weeks that, not seeing or hearing of Mongenod, I went one morning from the *Croix-Rouge*, where I was then living, to the *rue des Moineaux*, where he lived. I found he was living in furnished lodgings of the lowest class; but the landlady was a very worthy woman, the widow of a magistrate who died on the scaffold; she was utterly ruined by the Revolution, and had only a few louis with which to begin the hazardous trade of taking lodgers."

Here Monsieur Alain interrupted himself to explain. "I knew her later," he said; "she then had seven houses in *Saint-Roch*, and was making quite a little fortune.

"'The citizen Mongenod is not at home,' the landlady said to me; 'but there is some one there.' This

remark excited my curiosity. I went up to the fifth story. A charming person opened the door, — oh, such a pretty young woman ! who looked at me rather suspiciously and kept the door half closed. ‘I am Alain, a friend of Mongenod’s,’ I said. Instantly the door opened wide, and I entered a miserable garret, which was, nevertheless, kept with the utmost neatness. The pretty young woman offered me a chair before a fireplace where were ashes but no fire, at the corner of which I saw a common earthen foot-warmer. ‘It makes me very happy, monsieur,’ she said, taking my hand and pressing it affectionately, ‘to be able to express to you my gratitude. You have indeed saved us. Were it not for you I might never have seen Mongenod again. He might, — yes, he would have thrown himself into the river. He was desperate when he left me to go and see you.’ On examining this young person I was surprised to see her head tied up in a foulard, and along the temples a curious dark line ; but I presently saw that her head was shaved. ‘Have you been ill?’ I asked, as I noticed this singularity. She cast a glance at a broken mirror in a shabby frame and colored ; then the tears came into her eyes. ‘Yes, monsieur,’ she said, ‘I had horrible headaches, and I was obliged to have my hair cut off ; it came to my feet.’ ‘Am I speaking to Madame Mongenod?’ I asked. ‘Yes, monsieur,’ she answered,

giving me a truly celestial look. I bowed to the poor little woman and went away, intending to make the landlady tell me something about them; but she was out. I was certain that poor young woman had sold her hair to buy bread. I went from there to a wood merchant and ordered half a cord of wood, telling the cartman and the sawyer to take the bill, which I made the dealer receipt to the name of citizen Mongenod, and give it to the little woman.

“There ends the period of what I long called *my foolishness*,” said Monsieur Alain, clasping his hands and lifting them with a look of repentance.

Godefroid could not help smiling. He was, as we shall see, greatly mistaken in that smile.

“Two days later,” resumed the worthy man, “I met one of those men who are neither friends nor strangers, with whom we have relations from time to time, and call acquaintances, — a certain Monsieur Barillaud, who remarked accidentally, *à propos* of the ‘Péruviens,’ that the author was a friend of his. ‘Then you know citizen Mongenod?’ I said.

“In those days we were obliged by law to call each other ‘citizen,’” said Monsieur Alain to Godefroid, by way of parenthesis. Then he continued his narrative: —

“The citizen looked at me, exclaiming, ‘I wish I never had known him; for he has several times bor-

rowed money of me, and shown his friendship by not returning it. He is a queer fellow, — good-hearted and all that, but full of illusions! always an imagination on fire! I will do him this justice, — he does not mean to deceive; but as he deceives himself about everything, he manages to behave like a dishonest man.’ ‘How much does he owe you?’ I asked. ‘Oh! a good many hundred francs. He’s a basket with a hole in the bottom. Nobody knows where his money goes; perhaps he does n’t know himself.’ ‘Has he any resources?’ ‘Well, yes,’ said Barillaud, laughing; ‘just now he is talking of buying land among the savages in the United States.’ I carried away with me the drop of vinegar which casual gossip thus put into my heart, and it soured all my feelings. I went to see my old master, in whose office Mongenod and I had studied law; he was now my counsel. When I told him about my loan to Mongenod and the manner in which I had acted, — ‘What!’ he cried, ‘one of my old clerks to behave in that way! You ought to have put him off till the next day and come to see me. You would then have found out that I have forbidden my clerks to let Mongenod into this office. Within the last year he has borrowed three hundred francs of me in silver, — an enormous sum at present rates. Three days before he breakfasted with you I met him on the street, and he gave such a piteous account of his poverty that I let

him have two louis.' 'If I have been the dupe of a clever comedian,' I said to Bordin, 'so much the worse for him, not for me. But tell me what to do.' 'You must try to get from him a written acknowledgment; for a debtor, however insolvent he may be, may become solvent, and then he will pay.' Thereupon Bordin took from a tin box a case on which I saw the name of Mongenod; he showed me three receipts of a hundred francs each. 'The next time he comes I shall have him admitted, and I shall make him add the interest and the two louis, and give me a note for the whole. I shall, at any rate, have things properly done, and be in a position to obtain payment.' 'Well,' said I to Bordin, 'can you have my matter set right so far, as well as yours? for I know you are a good man, and what you do will be right.' 'I have remained master of my ground,' he said; 'but when persons behave as you have done they are at the mercy of a man who can snap his fingers at them. As for me, I don't choose that any man should get the better of me, — get the better of a former attorney to the Châtelet! — ta-ra-ra! Every man to whom a sum of money is lent as heedlessly as you lent yours to Mongenod, ends, after a certain time, by thinking that money his own. It is no longer your money, it is *his* money; you become his creditor, — an inconvenient, unpleasant person. A debtor will then try to get rid of you by some juggling

with his conscience; and out of one hundred men in his position, seventy-five will do their best never to see or hear of you again.' 'Then you think only twenty-five men in a hundred are honest?' 'Did I say that?' he replied, smiling maliciously. 'The estimate is too high?'"

Monsieur Alain paused to put the fire together; that done, he resumed:—

"Two weeks later I received a letter from Bordin asking me to go to his office and get my receipt. I went. 'I tried to get fifty of your louis for you,' he said, 'but the birds had flown. Say good-bye to your yellow boys; those pretty canaries are off to other climes. You have had to do with a sharper; that's what he is. He declared to me that his wife and father-in-law had gone to the United States with sixty of your louis to buy land; that he intended to follow, for the purpose, he said, of making a fortune and paying his debts; the amount of which, carefully drawn up, he confided to me, requesting me to keep an eye on what became of his creditors. Here is a list of the items,' continued Bordin, showing me a paper from which he read the total, — 'Seventeen thousand francs in coin; a sum with which a house could be bought that would bring in two thousand francs a year.' After replacing the list in the case, Bordin gave me a note for a sum equivalent to a hundred louis in gold,

with a letter in which Mongenod admitted having received my hundred louis, on which he owed interest. 'So now I am all right,' I said to Bordin. 'He cannot deny the debt,' replied my old master; 'but where there are no funds, even the king—I should say the Directory—can't enforce rights.' I went home. Believing that I had been robbed in a way intentionally screened from the law, I withdrew my esteem from Mongenod, and resigned myself philosophically.

"If I have dwelt on these details, which are so commonplace and seem so slight," said the worthy man, looking at Godefroid, "it is not without good reason. I want to explain to you how I was led to act, as most men act, in defiance of the rules which savages observe in the smallest matters. Many persons would justify themselves by the opinion of so excellent a man as Bordin; but to-day I know myself to have been inexcusable. When it comes to condemning one of our fellows, and withdrawing our esteem from him, we should act from our own convictions only. But have we any right to make our heart a tribunal before which we arraign our neighbor? Where is the law? what is our standard of judgment? That which in us is weakness may be strength in our neighbor. So many beings, so many different circumstances for every act; and there are no two beings exactly alike in all humanity. Society alone has the right over its members

of repression ; as for punishment, I deny it that right. Repression suffices ; and that, besides, brings with it punishment enough.

“ So,” resumed Monsieur Alain, continuing his history, having drawn from it that noble teaching, “ after listening to the gossip of the Parisian, and relying on the wisdom of my old master, I condemned Mongenod. His play, ‘ Les Péruviens,’ was announced. I expected to receive a ticket from Mongenod for the first representation ; I established in my own mind a sort of claim on him. It seemed to me that by reason of my loan my friend was a sort of vassal of mine, who owed me a number of things besides the interest on my money. We all think that. Mongenod not only did not send me a ticket, but I saw him from a distance coming towards me in that dark passage under the Théâtre Feydeau, well dressed, almost elegant ; he pretended not to see me ; then, after he had passed and I turned to run after him, my debtor hastily escaped through a transverse alley. This circumstance greatly irritated me ; and the irritation, instead of subsiding with time, only increased, and for the following reason : Some days after this encounter, I wrote to Mongenod somewhat in these terms : ‘ My friend, you ought not to think me indifferent to whatever happens to you of good or evil. Are you satisfied with the success of ‘ Les Péruviens ? ’ You forgot me (of course it was

your right to do so) for the first representation, at which I should have applauded you. But, nevertheless, I hope you found a Peru in your Peruvians, for I have found a use for my funds, and shall look to you for the payment of them when the note falls due. Your friend, Alain.' After waiting two weeks for an answer, I went to the rue des Moineaux. The landlady told me that the little wife did really go away with her father at the time that Mongenod told Bordin of their departure. Mongenod always left the garret very early in the morning and did not return till late at night. Another two weeks, and I wrote again, thus: 'My dear Mongenod, I cannot find you, and you do not reply to my letters. I do not understand your conduct. If I behaved thus to you, what would you think of me?' I did not subscribe the letter as before, 'Your friend,' I merely wrote, 'Kind regards.'

"Well, it was all of no use," said Monsieur Alain. "A month went by and I had no news of Mongenod. 'Les Péruviens' did not obtain the great success on which he counted. I went to the twentieth representation, thinking to find him and obtain my money. The house was less than half full; but Madame Scio was very beautiful. They told me in the foyer that the play would run a few nights longer. I went seven different times to Mongenod's lodging and did not find him; each time I left my name with the landlady. At last I

wrote again : ‘ Monsieur, if you do not wish to lose my respect, as you have my friendship, you will treat me now as a stranger, — that is to say, with politeness ; and you will tell me when you will be ready to pay your note, which is now due. I shall act according to your answer. Your obedient servant, Alain.’ No answer. We were then in 1799 ; one year, all but two months, had expired. At the end of those two months I went to Bordin. Bordin took the note, had it protested, and sued Mongenod for me. Meantime the disasters of the French armies had produced such depreciation of the Funds that investors could buy a five-francs dividend on seven francs capital. Therefore, for my hundred louis in gold, I might have bought myself fifteen hundred francs of income. Every morning, as I took my coffee and read the paper, I said to myself : ‘ That cursed Mongenod ! if it were not for him I should have three thousand francs a year to live on.’ Mongenod became my *bête-noire* ; I inveighed against him even as I walked the streets. ‘ Bordin is there,’ I thought to myself ; ‘ Bordin will put the screws on, and a good thing, too.’ My feelings turned to hatred, and my hatred to imprecations ; I cursed the man, and I believed he had every vice. ‘ Ah ! Monsieur Barillaud was very right,’ thought I, ‘ in all he told me ! ’ ”

Monsieur Alain paused reflectively.

“ Yes,” he said again, “ I thought him very right in

all he told me. At last, one morning, in came my debtor, no more embarrassed than if he didn't owe me a sou. When I saw him I felt all the shame he ought to have felt. I was like a criminal taken in the act; I was all upset. The eighteenth Brumaire had just taken place. Public affairs were doing well, the Funds had gone up. Bonaparte was off to fight the battle of Marengo. 'It is unfortunate, monsieur,' I said, receiving Mongenod standing, 'that I owe your visit to a sheriff's summons.' Mongenod took a chair and sat down. 'I came to tell you,' he said, 'that I am totally unable to pay you.' 'You made me miss a fine investment before the election of the First Consul, — an investment which would have given me a little fortune.' 'I know it, Alain,' he said, 'I know it. But what is the good of suing me and crushing me with bills of costs? I have nothing with which to pay anything. Lately I received letters from my wife and father-in-law; they have bought land with the money you lent me, and they send me a list of the things they need to improve it. I have spent all I could get on those purchases. Now, unless some one prevents it, I shall sail on a Dutch vessel from Flushing, whither I have sent the few things I am taking out to them. Bonaparte has won the battle of Marengo, peace will be signed, I may safely rejoin my family; and I have need to, for my dear little wife is about to give birth to a child.' 'And

so you have sacrificed me to your own interests?’ said I. ‘Yes,’ he answered, ‘for I believed you my friend.’ At that moment I felt myself inferior to Mongenod, so sublime did he seem to me as he said those grand words. ‘Did I not speak to you frankly,’ he said, ‘in this very room? I came to you, Alain, as the only person who would really understand me. I told you that fifty louis would be lost, but a hundred I could return to you. I did not bind myself by saying when; for how could I know the time at which my long struggle with disaster would end? You were my last friend. All others, even our old master Bordin, despised me for the very reason that I borrowed money of them. Oh! you do not know, Alain, the dreadful sensation which grips the heart of an honest man when, in the throes of poverty, he goes to a friend and asks him for succor, — and all that follows! I hope you never may know it; it is far worse than the anguish of death. You have written me letters which, if I had written them to you in a like situation, you would have thought very odious. You expected of me that which it was out of my power to do. But you are the only person to whom I shall try to justify myself. In spite of your severity, and though from being a friend you became a creditor on the day when Bordin asked for my note on your behalf (thus abrogating the generous compact you had made with me there, on that spot, when we clasped hands and

mingled our tears), — well, in spite of all that, I have remembered that day, and because of it I have come here to say to you, You do not know misery, therefore do not judge it. I have not had one moment when I could answer you. Would you have wished me to come here and cajole you with words? I could not pay you; I did not even have enough for the bare necessities of those whose lives depended on me. My play brought little. A novice in theatrical ways, I became a prey to musicians, actors, journalists, orchestras. To get the means to leave Paris and join my family, and carry to them the few things they need, I have sold “*Les Péruviens*” outright to the director, with two other pieces which I had in my portfolio. I start for Holland without a sou; I must reach Flushing as best I can; my voyage is paid, that is all. Were it not for the pity of my landlady, who has confidence in me, I should have to travel on foot, with my bag upon my back. But, in spite of your doubts of me, I, remembering that without you I never could have sent my wife and father-in-law to New York, am forever grateful to you. No, Monsieur Alain, I shall not forget that the hundred louis d’or you lent me would have yielded you to-day fifteen hundred francs a year.’ ‘I desire to believe you, Mon-genod,’ I said, shaken by the tone in which he made this explanation. ‘Ah, you no longer say *monsieur* to me!’ he said quickly, with a tender glance. ‘My God!

I shall quit France with less regret if I can leave one man behind me in whose eyes I am not half a swindler, nor a spendthrift, nor a man of illusions! Alain, I have loved an angel in the midst of my misery. A man who truly loves cannot be despicable.' At those words I stretched out my hand to him. He took it and wrung it. 'May heaven protect you!' I said. 'Are we still friends?' he asked. 'Yes,' I replied. 'It shall never be that my childhood's comrade and the friend of my youth left me for America under the feeling that I was angry with him.' Mongenod kissed me, with tears in his eyes, and rushed away."

Monsieur Alain stopped in his narrative for an instant and looked at Godefroid. "I remember that day with some satisfaction," he said. Then he resumed:

"A week or so later I met Bordin and told him of that interview. He smiled and said: 'I hope it was not a pretty bit of comedy. Didn't he ask for anything?' 'No,' I answered. 'Well, he came to see me the same day. I was almost as touched as you; and he asked me for means to get food on his journey. Well, well, time will show!' These remarks of Bordin made me fear I had foolishly yielded to mistaken sensibility. 'Nevertheless,' I said to myself, 'he, the old lawyer, did as I did.' I do not think it necessary to explain to you how I lost all, or nearly all, my property. I had placed a little in the Funds, which gave

me five hundred francs a year ; all else was gone. I was then thirty-four years old. I obtained, through the influence of Monsieur Bordin, a place as clerk, with a salary of eight hundred francs, in a branch office of the Mont-de-piété, rue des Augustins.¹ From that time I lived very modestly. I found a small lodging in the rue des Marais, on the third floor (two rooms and a closet), for two hundred and fifty francs a year. I dined at a common boarding-house for forty francs a month. I copied writings at night. Ugly as I was and poor, I had to renounce marriage."

As Godefroid heard this judgment which the poor man passed upon himself with beautiful simplicity and resignation, he made a movement which proved, far more than any confidence in words could have done, the resemblance of their destinies ; and the goodman, in answer to that eloquent gesture, seemed to expect the words that followed it.

"Have you never been loved?" asked Godefroid.

"Never !" he said ; "except by Madame, who returns to us all the love we have for her, — a love which I may call divine. You must be aware of it. We live through her life as she lives through ours ; we have but one soul among us ; and such pleasures, though they are not physical, are none the less intense ; we exist

¹ The Mont-de-Piété and its branches are pawn-shops under control of the government. — TR.

through our hearts. Ah, my child!" he continued, "when women come to appreciate moral qualities, they are indifferent to others; and they are then old — Oh! I have suffered deeply, — yes, deeply!"

"And I, in the same way," said Godefroid.

"Under the Empire," said the worthy man, resuming his narrative, "the Funds did not always pay their dividends regularly; it was necessary to be prepared for suspensions of payment. From 1802 to 1814 there was scarcely a week that I did not attribute my misfortunes to Mongenod. 'If it were not for Mongenod,' I used to say to myself, 'I might have married. If I had never known him I should not be obliged to live in such privation.' But then, again, there were other times when I said, 'Perhaps the unfortunate fellow has met with ill luck over there.' In 1806, at a time when I found my life particularly hard to bear, I wrote him a long letter, which I sent by way of Holland. I received no answer. I waited three years, placing all my hopes on that answer. At last I resigned myself to my life. To the five hundred francs I received from the Funds I now added twelve hundred from the Mont-de-piété (for they raised my salary), and five hundred which I obtained from Monsieur César Birotteau, perfumer, for keeping his books in the evening. Thus, not only did I manage to get along comfortably, but I laid by eight hundred francs a year. At the beginning of 1814

I invested nine thousand francs of my savings at forty francs in the Funds, and thus I was sure of sixteen hundred francs a year for my old age. By that time I had fifteen hundred a year from the Mont-de-piété, six hundred for my book-keeping, sixteen hundred from the Funds; in all, three thousand seven hundred francs a year. I took a lodging in the rue de Seine, and lived a little better. My place had brought me into relations with many unfortunates. For the last twelve years I had known better than any man whatsoever the misery of the poor. Once or twice I had been able to do a real service. I felt a vivid pleasure when I found that out of ten persons relieved, one or two households had been put on their feet. It came into my mind that benevolence ought not to consist in throwing money to those who suffered. 'Doing charity,' to use that common expression, seemed to me too often a premium offered to crime. I began to study the question. I was then fifty years of age, and my life was nearly over. 'Of what good am I?' thought I. 'To whom can I leave my savings? When I have furnished my rooms handsomely, and found a good cook, and made my life suitable in all respects, what then? — how shall I employ my time?' Eleven years of revolution, and fifteen years of poverty, had, as I may say, eaten up the most precious part of my life, — used it up in sterile toil for my own individual preservation. No man at

the age of fifty could spring from that obscure, repressed condition to a brilliant future; but every man could be of use. I understood by this time that watchful care and wise counsels have tenfold greater value than money given; for the poor, above all things, need a guide, if only in the labor they do for others, for speculators are never lacking to take advantage of them. Here I saw before me both an end and an occupation, not to speak of the exquisite enjoyments obtained by playing in a miniature way the rôle of Providence."

"And to-day you play it in a grand way; do you not?" asked Godefroid, eagerly.

"Ah! you want to know everything," said the old man. "No, no! Would you believe it," he continued after this interruption, "the smallness of my means to do the work I now desired to do brought back the thought of Mongenod. 'If it were not for Mongenod,' I kept saying to myself, 'I could do so much more. If a dishonest man had not deprived me of fifteen hundred francs a year I could save this or that poor family.' Excusing my own impotence by accusing another, I felt that the miseries of those to whom I could offer nothing but words of consolation were a curse upon Mongenod. That thought soothed my heart. One morning, in January, 1816, my housekeeper announced, — whom do you suppose? — Mon-

genod ! Monsieur Mongenod ! And whom do you think I saw enter my room ? The beautiful young woman I had once seen, — only now she was thirty-six years old, — followed by her three children and Mongenod. He looked younger than when he went away ; for prosperity and happiness do shed a halo round their favorites. Thin, pale, yellow, shrivelled, when I last saw him, he was now plump, sleek, rosy as a prebendary, and well dressed. He flung himself into my arms. Feeling, perhaps, that I received him coldly, his first words were : ‘ Friend, I could not come sooner. The ocean was not free to passenger ships till 1815 ; then it took me a year to close up my business and realize my property. I have succeeded, my friend. When I received your letter in 1806, I started in a Dutch vessel to bring you myself a little fortune ; but the union of Holland with the French Empire caused the vessel to be taken by the English and sent to Jamaica, from which island I escaped by mere chance. When I reached New York I found I was a victim to the bankruptcy of others. In my absence my poor Charlotte had not been able to protect herself against schemers. I was therefore forced to build up once more the edifice of my fortunes. However, it is all done now, and here we are. By the way those children are looking at you, you must be aware that we have often talked to them of their father’s benefactor.’ ‘ Oh, yes, yes, monsieur !’

said the beautiful Madame Mongenod, ‘we have never passed a single day without remembering you. Your share has been set aside in all our affairs. We have looked forward eagerly to the happiness we now have in returning to you your fortune, not thinking for a moment that the payment of these just dues can ever wipe out our debt of gratitude.’ With those words Madame Mongenod held out to me that magnificent box you see over there, in which were one hundred and fifty notes of a thousand francs each.”

The old man paused an instant as if to dwell on that moment; then he went on:—

“Mongenod looked at me fixedly and said: ‘My poor Alain, you have suffered, I know; but we did divine your sufferings; we did try every means to send the money to you, and failed in every attempt. You told me you could not marry,—that I had prevented it. But here is our eldest daughter; she has been brought up in the thought of becoming your wife, and she will have a dowry of five hundred thousand francs.’ ‘God forbid that I should make her miserable!’ I cried hastily, looking at the girl, who was as beautiful as her mother when I first saw her. I drew her to me to kiss her brow. ‘Don’t be afraid, my beautiful child!’ I said. ‘A man of fifty to a girl of seventeen?—never! and a man as plain and ugly as I am?—never!’ I cried. ‘Monsieur,’ she said, ‘my father’s benefactor could

not be ugly for me.' Those words, said spontaneously, with simple candor, made me understand how true was all that Mongenod had said. I then gave him my hand, and we embraced each other again. 'My friend,' I said, 'I have done you wrong. I have often accused you, cursed you.' 'You had the right to do so, Alain,' he replied, blushing; 'you suffered, and through me.' I took Mongenod's note from my desk and returned it to him. 'You will all stay and breakfast with me, I hope?' I said to the family. 'On condition that you dine with us,' said Mongenod. 'We arrived yesterday. We are going to buy a house; and I mean to open a banking business between Paris and North America, so as to leave it to this fellow here,' he added, showing me his eldest son, who was fifteen years old. We spent the rest of the day together and went to the play; for Mongenod and his family were actually hungry for the theatre. The next morning I placed the whole sum in the Funds, and I now had in all about fifteen thousand francs a year. This fortune enabled me to give up book-keeping at night, and also to resign my place at the Mont-de-piété, to the great satisfaction of the underling who stepped into my shoes. My friend died in 1827, at the age of sixty-three, after founding the great banking-house of Mongenod and Company, which made enormous profits from the first loans under the Restoration. His daughter, to whom he subsequently

gave a million in dowry, married the Vicomte de Fontaine. The eldest son, whom you know, is not yet married; he lives with his mother and brother. We obtain from them all the sums we need. Frédéric (his father gave him my name in America), — Frédéric Mongenod is, at thirty-seven years of age, one of the ablest, and most upright, bankers in Paris. Not very long ago Madame Mongenod admitted to me that she had sold her hair, as I suspected, for twelve francs to buy bread. She gives me now twenty-four cords of wood a year for my poor people, in exchange for the half cord which I once sent her."

"This explains to me your relations with the house of Mongenod," said Godefroid, — "and your fortune."

Again the goodman looked at Godefroid with a smile, and the same expression of kindly mischief.

"Oh, go on!" said Godefroid, seeing from his manner that he had more to tell.

"This conclusion, my dear Godefroid, made the deepest impression upon me. If the man who had suffered so much, if my friend forgave my injustice, I could not forgive myself."

"Oh!" ejaculated Godefroid.

"I resolved to devote all my superfluous means — about ten thousand francs a year — to acts of intelligent benevolence," continued Monsieur Alain, tranquilly. "About this time it was that I made the

acquaintance of a judge of the Lower Civil Court of the Seine named Popinot, whom we had the great grief of losing about three years ago, and who practised for fifteen years an active and most intelligent charity in the quartier Saint-Marcel. It was he, with the venerable vicar of Notre-Dame and Madame, who first thought of founding the work in which we are now co-operating, and which, since 1825, has quietly done much good. This work has found its soul in Madame de la Chanterie, for she is truly the inspiration of this enterprise. The vicar has known how to make us more religious than we were at first, by showing us the necessity of being virtuous ourselves in order to inspire virtue; in short, to preach by example. The farther we have advanced in our work, the happier we have mutually found ourselves. And so, you see, it really was the repentance I felt for misconceiving the heart of my friend which gave me the idea of devoting to the poor, through my own hands, the fortune he returned to me, and which I accepted without objecting to the immensity of the sum returned in proportion to the sum lent. Its destination justified my taking it."

This narration, made quietly, without assumption, but with a gentle kindness in accent, look, and gesture, would have inspired Godefroid to enter this noble and sacred association if his resolution had not already been taken.

"You know the world very little," he said, "if you have such scruples about a matter that would not weigh on any other man's conscience."

"I know only the unfortunate," said Monsieur Alain. "I do not desire to know a world in which men are so little afraid of judging one another. But see! it is almost midnight, and I still have my chapter of the 'Imitation of Jesus Christ' to meditate upon! Good-night!"

Godefroid took the old man's hand and pressed it, with an expression of admiration.

"Can you tell me Madame de la Chanterie's history?" he asked.

"Impossible, without her consent," replied Monsieur Alain; "for it is connected with one of the most terrible events of Imperial policy. It was through my friend Bordin that I first knew Madame. He had in his possession all the secrets of that noble life; it was he who, if I may say so, led me to this house."

"I thank you," said Godefroid, "for having told me your life; there are many lessons in it for me."

"Do you know what is the moral of it?"

"Tell me," said Godefroid, "for perhaps I may see something in it different from what you see."

"Well, it is this: that pleasure is an accident in a Christian's life; it is not the aim of it; and this we learn too late."

“What happens when we turn to Christianity?” asked Godefroid.

“See!” said the goodman.

He pointed with his finger to some letters of gold on a black ground which the new lodger had not observed, for this was the first time he had ever been in Monsieur Alain’s room. Godefroid turned and read the words: TRANSIRE BENEFACIENDO.

“That is our motto. If you become one of us, that will be your only commission. We read that commission, which we have given to ourselves, at all times, in the morning when we rise, in the evening when we lie down, and when we are dressing. Ah! if you did but know what immense pleasures there are in accomplishing that motto!”

“Such as —?” said Godefroid, hoping for further revelations.

“I must tell you that we are as rich as Baron de Nucingen himself. But the ‘Imitation of Jesus Christ’ forbids us to regard our wealth as our own. We are only the spenders of it; and if we had any pride in being that, we should not be worthy of dispensing it. It would not be *transire benefaciendo*; it would be inward enjoyment. For if you say to yourself with a swelling of the nostrils, ‘I play the part of Providence!’ (as you might have thought if you had been in my place this morning and saved the future lives of

a whole family), you would become a Sardanapalus, — an evil one! None of these gentlemen living here thinks of himself when he does good. All vanity, all pride, all self-love, must be stripped off, and that is hard to do, — yes, very hard.”

Godefroid bade him good-night, and returned to his own room, deeply affected by this narrative. But his curiosity was more whetted than satisfied, for the central figure of the picture was Madame de la Chanterie. The history of the life of that woman became of the utmost importance to him, so that he made the obtaining of it the object of his stay in that house. He already perceived in this association of five persons a vast enterprise of Charity; but he thought far less of that than he did of its heroine.

VIII.

WHO SHE WAS — WIFE AND MOTHER.

THE would-be disciple passed many days in observing more carefully than he had hitherto done the rare persons among whom fate had brought him; and he became the subject of a moral phenomenon which modern philosophers have despised, — possibly out of ignorance.

The sphere in which he lived had a positive action upon Godefroid. The laws which regulate the physical nature under relation to the atmospheric environment in which it is developed, rule also in the moral nature. Hence it follows that the assembling together of condemned prisoners is one of the greatest of social crimes; and also that their isolation is an experiment of doubtful success. Condemned criminals ought to be in religious institutions, surrounded by prodigies of Good, instead of being cast as they are into sight and knowledge of Evil only. The Church can be expected to show an absolute devotion in this matter. If it sends missionaries to heathen or savage nations, with how much greater joy would it welcome the mission of

redeeming the heathen of civilization? for all criminals are atheists, and often without knowing they are so.

Godefroid found these five associated persons endowed with the qualities they required in him. They were all without pride, without vanity, truly humble and pious; also without any of the pretension which constitutes *devotion*, using that word in its worst sense. These virtues were contagious; he was filled with a desire to imitate these hidden heroes, and he ended by passionately studying the book he had begun by despising. Within two weeks he reduced his views of life to its simplest lines, — to what it really *is* when we consider it from the higher point of view to which the Divine spirit leads us. His curiosity — worldly at first, and excited by many vulgar and material motives — purified itself; if he did not renounce it altogether, the fault was not his; any one would have found it difficult to resign an interest in Madame de la Chanterie; but Godefroid showed, without intending it, a discretion which was appreciated by these persons, in whom the divine Spirit had developed a marvellous power of the faculties, — as, indeed, it often does among recluses. The concentration of the moral forces, no matter under what system it may be effected, increases the compass of them tenfold.

“Our friend is not yet converted,” said the good Abbé de Vèze, “but he is seeking to be.”

An unforeseen circumstance brought about the revelation of Madame de la Chanterie's history to Godefroid; and so fully was this made to him that the overpowering interest she excited in his soul was completely satisfied.

The public mind was at that time much occupied by one of those horrible criminal trials which mark the annals of our police-courts. This trial had gathered its chief interest from the character of the criminals themselves, whose audacity, superior intelligence in evil, and cynical replies, had horrified the community. It is a matter worthy of remark that no newspaper ever found its way into the hôtel de la Chanterie, and Godefroid only heard of the rejection of the criminals' appeal from his master in book-keeping; for the trial itself had taken place some time before he came to live in his new abode.

"Do you ever encounter," he said to his new friends, "such atrocious villains as those men? and if you do encounter them, how do you manage them?"

"In the first place," said Monsieur Nicolas, "there are no atrocious villains. There are diseased natures, to be cared for in asylums; but outside of those rare medical cases, we find only persons who are without religion, or who reason ill; and the mission of charity is to teach them the right use of reason, to encourage the weak, and guide aright those who go astray."

“And,” said the Abbé de Vèze, “all is possible to such teachers, for God is with them.”

“If they were to send you those criminals, you could do nothing with them, could you?” asked Godefroid.

“The time would be too short,” remarked Monsieur Alain.

“In general,” said Monsieur Nicolas, “persons turn over to religion souls which have reached the last stages of evil, and leave it no time to do its work. The criminals of whom you speak were men of remarkable vigor; could they have been within our hands in time they might have become distinguished men; but as soon as they committed a murder, it was no longer possible to interfere; they then belonged to human justice.”

“That must mean,” said Godefroid, “that you are against the penalty of death?”

Monsieur Nicolas rose hastily and left the room.

“Do not ever mention the penalty of death again before Monsieur Nicolas,” said Monsieur Alain. “He recognized in a criminal at whose execution he was officially present his natural son.”

“And the son was innocent!” added Monsieur Joseph.

Madame de la Chanterie, who had been absent for a while, returned to the salon at this moment.

“But you must admit,” said Godefroid, addressing

.

Monsieur Joseph, "that society cannot exist without the death penalty, and that those persons who to-morrow morning will have their heads cut —"

Godefroid felt his mouth suddenly closed by a vigorous hand, and he saw the abbé leading away Madame de la Chanterie in an almost fainting condition.

"What have you done?" Monsieur Joseph said to him. "Take him away, Alain!" he added, removing the hand with which he had gagged Godefroid. Then he followed the Abbé de Vèze into Madame de la Chanterie's room.

"Come!" said Monsieur Alain to Godefroid; "you have made it essential that I should tell you the secrets of Madame's life."

They were presently sitting in the old man's room.

"Well?" said Godefroid, whose face showed plainly his regret for having been the cause of something which, in that peaceful house, might be called a catastrophe.

"I am waiting till Manon comes to reassure us," replied the goodman, listening to the steps of the maid upon the staircase.

"Madame is better," said Manon. "Monsieur l'abbé has deceived her as to what was said." And she looked at Godefroid angrily.

"Good God!" cried the poor fellow, in distress, the tears coming into his eyes.

"Come, sit down," said Monsieur Alain, sitting down himself. Then he made a pause as if to gather up his ideas. "I don't know," he went on, "if I have the talent to worthily relate a life so cruelly tried. You must excuse me if the words of so poor a speaker as I are beneath the level of its actions and catastrophes. Remember that it is long since I left school, and that I am the child of a century in which men cared more for thought than for effect, — a prosaic century which knew only how to call things by their right names."

Godefroid made an acquiescing gesture, with an expression of sincere admiration, and said simply, "I am listening."

"You have just had a proof, my young friend," resumed the old man, "that it is impossible you should remain among us without knowing at least some of the terrible facts in the life of that saintly woman. There are ideas and illusions and fatal words which are completely interdicted in this house, lest they reopen wounds in Madame's heart, and cause a suffering which, if again renewed, might kill her."

"Good God!" cried Godefroid, "what have I done?"

"If Monsieur Joseph had not stopped the words on your lips, you were about to speak of that fatal instrument of death, and that would have stricken down

Madame de la Chanterie like a thunderbolt. It is time you should know all, for you will really belong to us before long, — we all think so. Here, then, is the history of her life: —

“Madame de la Chanterie,” he went on, after a pause, “comes from one of the first families of Lower Normandy. Her maiden name was Mademoiselle Barbe-Philiberte de Champignelles, of the younger branch of that house. She was destined to take the veil unless she could make a marriage which renounced on the husband’s side the dowry her family could not give her. This was frequently the case in the families of poor nobles.

“A Sieur de la Chanterie, whose family had fallen into obscurity, though it dates from the Crusade of Philip Augustus, was anxious to recover the rank and position which this ancient lineage properly gave him in the province of Normandy. This gentleman had doubly derogated from his rightful station; for he had amassed a fortune of nearly a million of francs as purveyor to the armies of the king at the time of the war in Hanover. The old man had a son; and this son, presuming on his father’s wealth (greatly exaggerated by rumor), was leading a life in Paris that greatly disquieted his father.

“The worth of Mademoiselle de Champignelles’s character was well known in the Bessin, — that beauti-

ful region of Lower Normandy near Bayeux, where the family lived. The old man, whose little estate of la Chanterie was between Caen and Saint-Lô, often heard regrets expressed before him that so perfect a young girl, and one so capable of rendering a husband happy, should be condemned to pass her life in a convent. When, on reflection, he expressed a desire to know more of the young lady, the hope was held out to him of obtaining the hand of Mademoiselle Philiberte for his son, provided he would take her without dowry. He went to Bayeux, had several interviews with the Champignelles's family, and was completely won by the noble qualities of the young girl.

“At sixteen years of age, Mademoiselle de Champignelles gave promise of what she would ultimately become. It was easy to see in her a living piety, an unalterable good sense, an inflexible uprightness, and one of those souls which never detach themselves from an affection under any compulsion. The old father, enriched by his extortions in the army, recognized in this charming girl a woman who could restrain his son by the power of virtue, and by the ascendancy of a nature that was firm without rigidity.

“You have seen her,” said Monsieur Alain, pausing in his narrative, “and you know that no one can be gentler than Madame de la Chanterie; and also, I may tell you, that no one is more confiding. She has kept,

even to her declining years, the candor and simplicity of innocence ; she has never been willing to believe in evil, and the little mistrust you may have noticed in her is due only to her terrible misfortunes.

“ The old man,” said Monsieur Alain, continuing, “ agreed with the Champignelles family to give a receipt for the legal dower of Mademoiselle Philiberte (this was necessary in those days) ; but in return, the Champignelles, who were allied to many of the great families, promised to obtain the erection of the little fief of la Chanterie into a barony ; and they kept their word. The aunt of the future husband, Madame de Boisfrelon, the widow of a parliamentary councillor, promised to bequeath her whole fortune to her nephew.

“ When these arrangements had been completed by the two families, the father sent for the son. At this time the latter was Master of petitions to the Grand Council. He was twenty-five years of age, and had already lived a life of folly with all the young seigneurs of the period ; in fact, the old purveyor had been forced more than once to pay his debts. The poor father, foreseeing further follies, was only too glad to make a settlement on his daughter-in-law of a certain sum ; and he entailed the estate of la Chanterie on the heirs male of the marriage.

“ But the Revolution,” said Monsieur Alain in a parenthesis, “ made that last precaution useless.

“Gifted with the beauty of an angel,” he continued, “and with wonderful grace and agility in all exercises of the body, the young Master of petitions possessed the gift of *charm*. Mademoiselle de Champignelles became, as you can readily believe, very much in love with her husband. The old man, delighted with the outset of the marriage, and believing in the reform of his son, sent the young couple to Paris. All this happened about the beginning of the year 1788.

“Nearly a whole year of happiness followed. Madame de la Chanterie enjoyed during that time the tenderest care and the most delicate attentions that a man deeply in love can bestow upon a loving woman. However short it may have been, the honeymoon did shine into the heart of that noble and most unfortunate woman. You know that in those days women nursed their children. Madame de la Chanterie had a daughter. That period during which a woman ought to be the object of redoubled care and tenderness proved, in this case, the beginning of untold miseries. The Master of petitions was obliged to sell all the property he could lay his hands on to pay former debts (which he had not acknowledged to his father) and fresh losses at play. Then the National Assembly decreed the dissolution of the Grand Council, the parliament, and all the law offices so dearly bought.

“The young household, increased by a daughter,

was soon without other means than those settled upon Madame de la Chanterie by her father-in-law. In twenty months that charming woman, now only seventeen and a half years old, was obliged to live — she and the child she was nursing — in an obscure quarter, and by the labor of her hands. She was then entirely abandoned by her husband, who fell by degrees lower and lower, into the society of women of the worst kind. Never did she reproach her husband, never has she allowed herself to blame him. She has sometimes told us how, during those wretched days, she would pray for her ‘dear Henri.’

“That scamp was named Henri,” said the worthy man interrupting himself. “We never mention that name here, nor that of Henriette. I resume :

“Never leaving her little room in the rue de la Corderie du Temple, except to buy provisions or to fetch her work, Madame de la Chanterie contrived to get along, thanks to a hundred francs which her father-in-law, touched by her goodness, sent to her once a month. Nevertheless, foreseeing that that resource might fail her, the poor young woman had taken up the hard and toilsome work of corset-making in the service of a celebrated dressmaker. This precaution proved a wise one. The father died, and his property was obtained by the son (the old monarchical laws of entail being then overthrown) and speedily dissipated

by him. The former Master of petitions was now one of the most ferocious presidents of the Revolutionary tribunals of that period; he became the terror of Normandy, and was able to satisfy all his passions. Imprisoned in his turn after the fall of Robespierre, the hatred of his department doomed him to certain death.

“Madame de la Chanterie heard of this through a letter of farewell which her husband wrote to her. Instantly, giving her little girl to the care of a neighbor, she went to the town where that wretch was imprisoned, taking with her the few louis which were all she owned. These louis enabled her to make her way into the prison. She succeeded in saving her husband by dressing him in her own clothes, under circumstances almost identical with those which, sometime later, were so serviceable to Madame de la Valette. She was condemned to death, but the government was ashamed to carry out the sentence; and the Revolutionary tribunal (the one over which her husband had formerly presided) connived at her escape. She returned to Paris on foot, without means, sleeping in farm buildings and fed by charity.”

“Good God!” cried Godefroid.

“Ah! wait,” said Monsieur Alain; “that is nothing. In eight years the poor woman saw her husband three times. The first time he stayed twenty-four hours in

the humble lodging of his wife, and carried away with him all her money ; having showered her with marks of tenderness and made her believe in his complete conversion. ‘ I could not,’ she said, ‘ refuse a husband for whom I prayed daily and of whom I thought exclusively.’ On the second occasion, Monsieur de la Chanterie arrived almost dying, and with what an illness ! She nursed him and saved his life. Then she tried to bring him to better sentiments and a decent life. After promising all that angel asked, the jacobin plunged back into frightful profigacy, and finally escaped the hands of justice only by again taking refuge with his wife, in whose care he died in safety.

“ Oh ! but that is nothing !” cried the goodman, seeing the pain on Godefroid’s face. “ No one, in the world in which he lived, had known he was a married man. Two years after his death Madame de la Chanterie discovered that a second Madame de la Chanterie existed, widowed like herself, and, like her, ruined. That bigamist had found two angels incapable of discarding him.

“ Towards 1803,” resumed Monsieur Alain after a pause, “ Monsieur de Boisfrelon, uncle of Madame de la Chanterie, came to Paris, his name having been erased from the list of *émigrés*, and brought Madame the sum of two hundred thousand francs which her father-in-law, the old purveyor, had formerly entrusted

to him for the benefit of his son's children. He persuaded the widow to return to Normandy; where she completed the education of her daughter and purchased, on excellent terms and still by the advice of her uncle, a patrimonial estate."

"Ah!" cried Godefroid.

"All that is still nothing," said Monsieur Alain; "we have not reached the period of storms and darkness. I resume:

"In 1807, after four years of rest and peace, Madame de la Chanterie married her daughter to a gentleman of rank, whose piety, antecedents, and fortune offered every guarantee that could be given, — a man who, to use a popular saying, 'was after every one's own heart,' in the best society of the provincial city where Madame and her daughter passed their winters. I should tell you that this society was composed of seven or eight families belonging to the highest nobility in France: d'Esgrignon, Troisville, Casteran, Nouâtre, etc. At the end of eighteen months the baron deserted his wife, and disappeared in Paris, where he changed his name.

"Madame de la Chanterie never knew the causes of this desertion until the lightning of a dreadful storm revealed them. Her daughter, brought up with anxious care and trained in the purest religious sentiments, kept total silence as to her troubles. This lack of

confidence in her mother was a painful blow to Madame de la Chanterie. Already she had several times noticed in her daughter indications of the reckless disposition of the father, increased in the daughter by an almost virile strength of will.

“The husband, however, abandoned his home of his own free will, leaving his affairs in a pitiable condition. Madame de la Chanterie is, even to this day, amazed at the catastrophe, which no human foresight could have prevented. The persons she prudently consulted before the marriage had assured her that the suitor’s fortune was clear and sound, and that no mortgages were on his estate. Nevertheless it appeared, after the husband’s departure, that for ten years his debts had exceeded the entire value of his property. Everything was therefore sold, and the poor young wife, now reduced to her own means, came back to her mother. Madame de la Chanterie knew later that the most honorable persons of the province had vouched for her son-in-law in their own interests; for he owed them all large sums of money, and they looked upon his marriage with Mademoiselle de la Chanterie as a means to recover them.

“There were, however, other reasons for this catastrophe, which you will find later in a confidential paper written for the eyes of the Emperor. Moreover, this man had long courted the good-will of the royalist

families by his devotion to the royal cause during the Revolution. He was one of Louis XVIII.'s most active emissaries and had taken part after 1793 in all conspiracies, — escaping their penalties, however, with such singular adroitness that he came, in the end, to be distrusted. Thanked for his services by Louis XVIII., but completely set aside in the royalist affairs, he had returned to live on his property, now much encumbered with debt.

“ These antecedents were then obscure (the persons initiated into the secrets of the royal closet kept silence about so dangerous a coadjutor), and he was therefore received with a species of reverence in a city devoted, to the Bourbons, where the cruellest deeds of the Chouannerie were accepted as legitimate warfare. The d’Esgrignons, Casterans, the Chevalier de Valois, in short, the whole aristocracy and the Church opened their arms to this royalist diplomat and drew him into their circle. Their protection was encouraged by the desire of his creditors for the payment of his debts. For three years this man, who was a villain at heart, a pendant to the late Baron de la Chanterie, contrived to restrain his vices and assume the appearance of morality and religion.

“ During the first months of his marriage he exerted a sort of spell over his wife; he tried to corrupt her mind by his doctrines (if it can be said that atheism

is a doctrine) and by the jesting tone in which he spoke of sacred principles. From the time of his return to the provinces this political manœuvrer had an intimacy with a young man, overwhelmed with debt like himself, but whose natural character was as frank and courageous as the baron's was hypocritical and base. This frequent guest, whose accomplishments, strong character, and adventurous life were calculated to influence a young girl's mind, was an instrument in the hands of the husband to bring the wife to adopt his theories. Never did she let her mother know the abyss into which her fate had cast her.

“ We may well distrust all human prudence when we think of the infinite precautions taken by Madame de la Chanterie in marrying her only daughter. The blow, when it came to a life so devoted, so pure, so truly religious as that of a woman already tested by many trials, gave Madame de la Chanterie a distrust of herself which served to isolate her from her daughter ; and all the more because her daughter, in compensation for her misfortunes, exacted complete liberty, ruled her mother, and was even, at times, unkind to her.

“ Wounded thus in all her affections, mistaken in her devotion and love for her husband, to whom she had sacrificed without a word her happiness, her fortune, and her life ; mistaken in the education exclusively religious which she had given to her daughter ; mistaken

in the confidence she had placed in others in the affair of her daughter's marriage; and obtaining no justice from the heart in which she had sown none but noble sentiments, she united herself still more closely to God as the hand of trouble lay heavy upon her. She was indeed almost a nun; going daily to church, performing cloistral penances, and practising economy that she might have means to help the poor.

"Could there be, up to this point, a saintlier life or one more tried than that of this noble woman, so gentle under misfortune, so brave in danger, and always Christian?" said Monsieur Alain, appealing to Godefroid. "You know Madame now, — you know if she is wanting in sense, judgment, reflection; in fact, she has those qualities to the highest degree. Well! the misfortunes I have now told you, which might be said to make her life surpass all others in adversity, are as nothing to those that were still in store for this poor woman. But let us now concern ourselves exclusively with Madame de la Chanterie's daughter" said the old man, resuming his narrative.

"At eighteen years of age, the period of her marriage, Mademoiselle de la Chanterie was a young girl of delicate complexion, brown in tone with a brilliant color, graceful in shape, and very pretty. Above a forehead of great beauty was a mass of dark hair which harmonized with the brown eyes and the general

gayety of her expression. A certain daintiness of feature was misleading as to her true character and her almost virile decision. She had small hands and small feet; in fact, there was something fragile about her whole person which excluded the idea of vigor and determination. Having always lived beside her mother, she had a most perfect innocence of thought and behavior and a really remarkable piety. This young girl, like her mother, was fanatically attached to the Bourbons; she was therefore a bitter enemy to the Revolution, and regarded the dominion of Napoleon as a curse inflicted by Providence upon France in punishment of the crimes of 1793.

“The conformity of opinion on this subject between Madame de la Chanterie and her daughter, and the daughter’s suitor, was one of the determining reasons of the marriage.

“The friend of the husband had commanded a body of Chouans at the time that hostilities were renewed in 1799; and it seems that the baron’s object (Madame de la Chanterie’s son-in-law was a baron) in fostering the intimacy between his wife and his friend was to obtain, through her influence, certain succor from that friend.

“This requires a few words of explanation,” said Monsieur Alain, interrupting his narrative, “about an association which in those days made a great deal of

noise. I mean the ‘Chauffeurs.’¹ Every province in the west of France was at that time more or less overrun with these ‘brigands,’ whose object was far less pillage than a resurrection of the royalist warfare. They profited, so it was said, by the great number of ‘refractories,’ — the name applied to those who evaded the conscription, which was at that time, as you probably know, enforced to actual abuse.

“Between Mortagne and Rennes, and even beyond, as far as the banks of the Loire, nocturnal expeditions were organized, which attacked, especially in Normandy, the holders of property bought from the National domain.² These armed bands sent terror throughout those regions. I am not misleading you when I ask you to observe that in certain departments the action of the laws was for a long time paralyzed.

¹ *Chauffeurs*. This name applies to royalists who robbed the mail-coaches conveying government funds, and levied tribute on those who had bought the confiscated property of *émigrés* at the West. When the Thermidorian reaction began, after the fall of Robespierre, other companies of royalists, chiefly young nobles who had not emigrated, were formed at the South and East under various names, such as “The Avengers,” and “The Company of Jehu,” who stopped the diligences conveying government money, which they transmitted to Brittany and La Vendée for the support of the royalist troops. They regarded this as legitimate warfare, and were scrupulous not to touch private property. When captured, however, they were tried and executed as highwaymen. — Tr.

² The National domain was the name given to the confiscated property of the *émigrés*, which was sold from time to time at auction to the highest bidder. — Tr.

“These last echoes of the civil war made much less noise than you would imagine, accustomed as we are now to the frightful publicity given by the press to every trial, even the least important, whether political or individual. The system of the Imperial government was that of all absolute governments. The censor allowed nothing to be published in the matter of politics except accomplished facts, and those were travestied. If you will take the trouble to look through files of the ‘*Moniteur*’ and the other newspapers of that time, even those of the West, you will not find a word about the four or five criminal trials which cost the lives of sixty or eighty ‘brigands.’ The term *brigands*, applied during the revolutionary period to the Vendéans, Chouans, and all those who took up arms for the house of Bourbon, was afterwards continued judicially under the Empire against all royalists accused of plots. To some ardent and loyal natures the emperor and his government were the enemy; any form of warfare against them was legitimate. I am only explaining to you these opinions, not justifying them.

“Now,” he said, after one of those pauses which are necessary in such long narratives, “if you realize how these royalists, ruined by the civil war of 1793, were dominated by violent passions, and how some exceptional natures (like that of Madame de la Chanterie’s

son-in-law and his friend) were eaten up with desires of all kinds, you may be able to understand how it was that the acts of brigandage which their political views justified when employed against the government in the service of the good cause, might in some cases be committed for personal ends.

“The younger of the two men had been for some time employed in collecting the scattered fragments of Chouannerie, and was holding them ready to act at an opportune moment. There came a terrible crisis in the emperor’s career when, shut up in the island of Lobau, he seemed about to give way under the combined and simultaneous attack of England and Austria. This was the moment for the Chouan uprising ; but just as it was about to take place, the victory of Wagram rendered the conspiracy in the provinces powerless.

“This expectation of exciting civil war in Brittany, La Vendée, and part of Normandy, coincided in time with the final wreck of the baron’s fortune ; and this wreck, coming at this time, led him to undertake an expedition to capture funds of the government which he might apply to the liquidation of the claims upon his property. But his wife and friend refused to take part in applying to private interests the money taken by armed force from the Receiver’s offices and the couriers and post-carriages of the government, — money taken, as they thought, justifiably by the rules

of war to pay the regiments of 'refractories' and Chouans, and purchase the arms and ammunition with which to equip them. At last, after an angry discussion in which the young leader, supported by the wife, positively refused to hand over to the husband a portion of a large sum of money which the young leader had seized for the benefit of the royal armies from the treasury of the West, the baron suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, to avoid arrest for debt, having no means left by which to ward it off. Poor Madame de la Chanterie was wholly ignorant of all these facts; but even they are nothing to the plot still hidden behind these preliminary facts.

"It is too late to-night," said Monsieur Alain, looking at his little clock, "to go on with my narrative, which would take me, in any case, a long time to finish in my own words. Old Bordin, my friend, whose management of the famous Simeuse case had won him much credit in the royalist party, and who pleaded in the well-known criminal affair called that of the Chauffeurs de Mortagne, gave me, after I was installed in this house, two legal papers relating to the terrible history of Madame de la Chanterie and her daughter. I kept them because Bordin died soon after, before I had a chance to return them. You shall read them. You will find the facts much more succinctly stated than I could state them. Those facts are so numerous that I

should only lose myself in the details and confuse them, whereas in these papers you have them in a legal summary. To-morrow, if you come to me, I will finish telling you all that relates to Madame de la Chanterie ; for you will then know the general facts so thoroughly that I can end the whole story in a few words."

IX.

THE LEGAL STATEMENT.

MONSIEUR ALAIN placed the papers, yellowed by time, in Godefroid's hand; the latter, bidding the old man good-night, carried them off to his room, where he read, before he slept, the following document:—

THE INDICTMENT.

Court of Criminal and Special Justice for the Department of the Orne.

The attorney-general to the Imperial Court of Caen, appointed to fulfil his functions before the Special Criminal Court established by imperial decree under date September, 1809, and sitting at Alençon, states to the Imperial Court the following facts which have appeared under the above procedure.

The plot of a company of brigands, evidently long planned with consummate care, and connected with a scheme for inciting the Western departments to revolt, has shown itself in certain attempts against the private property of citizens, but more especially in an armed attack and robbery committed on the mail-coach which

transported, May —, 18—, the money in the treasury at Caen to the Treasury of France. This attack, which recalls the deplorable incidents of a civil war now happily extinguished, manifests a spirit of wickedness which the political passions of the present day do not justify.

Let us pass to facts. The plot is complicated, the details are numerous. The investigation has lasted one year; but the evidence, which has followed the crime step by step, has thrown the clearest light on its preparation, execution, and results.

The conception of the plot was formed by one Charles-Amédée-Louis-Joseph Rifoël, calling himself Chevalier du Vissard, born at the Vissard, district of Saint-Mexme, near Ernée, and a former leader of the rebels.

This criminal, whom H. M. the Emperor and King pardoned at the time of the general pacification, and who has profited by the sovereign's magnanimity to commit other crimes, has already paid on the scaffold the penalty of his many misdeeds; but it is necessary to recall some of his actions, because his influence was great on the guilty persons now before the court, and he is closely connected with the facts of this case.

This dangerous agitator, concealed, according to the usual custom of the rebels, under the name of Pierrot, went from place to place throughout the departments of the West gathering together the elements of rebellion;

but his chief resort was the château of Saint-Savin, the residence of a Madame Lechantre and her daughter, a Madame Bryond, situated in the district of Saint-Savin, arrondissement of Mortagne. Several of the most horrible events of the rebellion of 1799 are connected with this strategic point. Here a bearer of despatches was murdered, his carriage pillaged by the brigands under command of a woman, assisted by the notorious Marche-à-Terre. Brigandage appeared to be endemic in that locality.

- An intimacy, which we shall not attempt to characterize, existed for more than a year between the woman Bryond and the said Rifoël.

It was in this district that an interview took place, in April, 1808, between Rifoël and a certain Boislaurier, a leader known by the name of Auguste in the baneful rebellions of the West, who instigated the affair now before the court.

The somewhat obscure point of the relations between these two leaders is cleared up by the testimony of numerous witnesses, and also by the judgment of the court which condemned Rifoël.

From that time Boislaurier had an understanding with Rifoël, and they acted in concert.

They communicated to each other, at first secretly, their infamous plans, encouraged by the absence of His Imperial and Royal Majesty with the armies in Spain.

Their scheme was to obtain possession of the money of the Treasury as the fundamental basis of future operations.

Some time after this, one named Dubut, of Caen, sent an emissary to the château of Saint-Savin named Hiley — commonly called “The Laborer,” long known as a highwayman, a robber of diligences — to give information as to the men who could safely be relied upon.

It was thus by means of Hiley that the plotters obtained, from the beginning, the co-operation of one Herbomez, otherwise called General Hardi, a former rebel of the same stamp as Rifoël, and like him faithless to his pledges under the amnesty.

Herbomez and Hiley recruited from the surrounding districts seven brigands whose names are: —

1. Jean Cibot, called Pille-Miche, one of the boldest brigands of the corps formed by Montauran in the year VII., and a participator in the attack upon the courier of Mortagne and his murder.

2. François Lisieux, called Grand-Fils, refractory of the department of the Mayenne.

3. Charles Grenier, called Fleur-de-Genèt, deserter from the 69th brigade.

4. Gabriel Bruce, called Gros-Jean, one of the most ferocious Chouans of Fontaine’s division.

5. Jacques Horeau, called Stuart, ex-lieutenant in

the same brigade, one of the confederates of Tinténiaç, well-known for his participation in the expedition to Quiberon.

6. Marie-Anne Cabot, called Lajeunesse, former huntsman to the Sieur Carol of Alençon.

7. Louis Minard, refractory.

These confederates were lodged in three different districts, in the houses of the following named persons : Binet, Mélin, and Laravinière, innkeepers or publicans, and all devoted to Rifoël.

The necessary arms were supplied by one Jean-François Lèveillé, notary ; an incorrigible assistant of the brigands, and their go-between with certain hidden leaders ; also by one Félix Courceuil, commonly called Confesseur, former surgeon of the rebel armies of La Vendée ; both these men are from Alençon.

Eleven muskets were hidden in a house belonging to the Sieur Bryond in the faubourg of Alençon, where they were placed without his knowledge.

When the Sieur Bryond left his wife to pursue the fatal course she had chosen, these muskets, mysteriously taken from the said house, were transported by the woman Bryond in her own carriage to the château of Saint-Savin.

It was then that the acts of brigandage in the department of the Orne and the adjacent departments took place, — acts that amazed both the authorities and

the inhabitants of those regions, which had long been entirely pacificated ; acts, moreover, which proved that these odious enemies of the government and the French Empire were in the secret of the coalition of 1809 through communication with the royalist party in foreign countries.

The notary Lèveillé, the woman Bryond, Dubut of Caen, Herboomez of Mayenne, Boislaurier of Mans, and Rifoël, were therefore the heads of the association, which was composed of certain guilty persons already condemned to death and executed with Rifoël, certain others who are the accused persons at present under trial, and a number more who have escaped just punishment by flight or by the silence of their accomplices.

It was Dubut who, living near Caen, notified the notary Lèveillé when the government money contained in the local tax-office would be despatched to the Treasury.

We must remark here that after the time of the removal of the muskets, Lèveillé, who went to see Bruce, Grenier, and Cibot in the house of Mélin, found them hiding the muskets in a shed on the premises, and himself assisted in the operation.

A general rendezvous was arranged to take place at Mortagne, in the hôtel de l'Écu de France. All the accused persons were present under various disguises.

It was then that Léveill , the woman Bryond, Dubut, Herbomez, Boislaurier and Hiley (the ablest of the secondary accomplices, as Cibot was the boldest) obtained the co-operation of one Vauthier, called Vieux-Ch ne, a former servant of the famous Longuy, and now hostler of the hotel. Vauthier agreed to notify the woman Bryond of the arrival and departure of the diligence bearing the government money, which always stopped for a time at the hotel.

The woman Bryond collected the scattered brigands at the ch teau de Saint-Savin, a few miles from Mortagne, where she had lived with her mother since the separation from her husband. The brigands, with Hiley at their head, stayed at the ch teau for several days. The woman Bryond, assisted by her maid Godard, prepared with her own hands the food of these men. She had already filled a loft with hay, and there the provisions were taken to them. While awaiting the arrival of the government money these brigands made nightly sorties from Saint-Savin, and the whole region was alarmed by their depredations. There is no doubt that the outrages committed at la Sartini re, at Vonay, and at the ch teau of Saint-Senly, were committed by this band, whose boldness equals their criminality, though they were able to so terrify their victims that the latter have kept silence, and the authorities have been unable to obtain any testimony from them.

While thus putting under contribution those persons in the neighborhood who had purchased lands of the National domain, these brigands carefully explored the forest of Chesnay which they selected as the theatre of their crime.

Not far from this forest is the village of Louvigny. An inn is kept there by the brothers Chaussard, formerly game-keepers on the Troisville estate, which inn was made the final rendezvous of the brigands. These brothers knew beforehand the part they were to play in the affair. Courceuil and Boislaurier had long made overtures to them to revive their hatred against the government of our august Emperor, telling them that among the guests who would be sent to them would be certain men of their acquaintance, the dreaded Hiley and the not less dreaded Cibot.

Accordingly, on the 6th, the seven bandits, under Hiley, arrived at the inn of the brothers Chaussard, and there they spent two days. On the 8th Hiley led off his men, saying they were going to a place about nine miles distant, and asking the brothers to send provisions for them to a certain fork in the road not far distant from the village. Hiley himself returned and slept at the inn.

Two persons on horseback, who were undoubtedly Rifoël and the woman Bryond (for it is stated that this woman accompanied Rifoël on these expeditions on

horseback and dressed as a man), arrived during the evening and conversed with Hiley.

The next day Hiley wrote a letter to the notary Léveillé, which one of the Chaussard brothers took to the latter, bringing back his answer.

Two hours later Rifoël and the woman Bryond returned and had an interview with Hiley.

It was then found necessary to obtain an axe to open, as we shall see, the cases containing the money. The notary went with the woman Bryond to Saint-Savin, where they searched in vain for an axe. The notary returned alone; half way back he met Hiley, to whom he stated that they could not obtain an axe.

Hiley returned to the inn, where he ordered supper for ten persons; seven of them being the brigands, who had now returned, fully armed. Hiley made them stack their arms in the military manner. They then sat down to table and supped in haste. Hiley ordered provisions prepared to take away with him. Then he took the elder Chaussard aside and asked him for an axe. The innkeeper who, if we believe him, was surprised, refused to give one. Courceuil and Boislaurier arrived; the night wore on; the three men walked the floor of their room discussing the plot. Courceuil, called "Confesseur," the most wily of the party, obtained an axe; and about two in the morning they all went away by different paths.

Every moment was of value ; the execution of the crime was fixed for that night. Hiley, Courceuil, and Boislaurier led and placed their men. Hiley hid in ambush with Minard, Cabot, and Bruce at the right of the Chesnay forest ; Boislaurier, Grenier, and Horeau took the centre ; Courceuil, Herbomez, and Lisieux occupied the ravine to the left of the wood. All these positions are indicated on the ground-plan drawn by the engineer of the government survey-office, which is here subjoined.

The diligence, which had left Mortagne about one in the morning, was driven by one Rousseau, whose conduct proved so suspicious that his arrest was judged necessary. The vehicle, driven slowly, would arrive about three o'clock at the forest of Chesnay.

A single gendarme accompanied the diligence, which would stop for breakfast at Donnery. Three passengers only were making the trip, and were now walking up the hill with the gendarme.

The driver, who had driven very slowly to the bridge of Chesnay at the entrance of the wood, now hastened his horses with a vigor and eagerness remarked by the passengers, and turned into a cross-road, called the road of Senzey. The carriage was thus out of sight ; and the gendarme with the three young men were hurrying to overtake it when they heard a shout : "Halt !" and four shots were fired at them.

The attack on the diligence.

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The gendarme, who was not hit, drew his sabre and rushed in the direction of the vehicle. He was stopped by four armed men, who fired at him; his eagerness saved him, for he ran toward one of the three pass-engers to tell him to make for Chesnay and ring the tocsin. But two brigands followed him, and one of them, taking aim, sent a ball through his left shoulder, which broke his arm, and he fell helpless.

The shouts and firing were heard in Donnery. A corporal stationed there and one gendarme ran toward the sounds. The firing of a squad of men took them to the opposite side of the wood to that where the pillage was taking place. The noise of the firing prevented the corporal from hearing the cries of the wounded gendarme; but he did distinguish a sound which proved to be that of an axe breaking and chopping into cases. He ran toward the sound. Meeting four armed bandits, he called out to them, "Surrender, villains!"

They replied: "Stay where you are, or you are a dead man!" The corporal sprang forward; two shots were fired and one struck him; a ball went through his left leg and into the flank of his horse. The brave man, bathed in blood, was forced to give up the unequal fight; he shouted "Help! the brigands are at Chesnay!" but all in vain.

The robbers, masters of the ground thanks to their

numbers, ransacked the coach. They had gagged and bound the driver by way of deception. The cases were opened, the bags of money thrown out; the horses were unharnessed and the silver and gold loaded on their backs. Three thousand francs in copper were rejected; but a sum in other coin of one hundred and three thousand francs was safely carried off on the four horses.

The brigands took the road to the hamlet of Menneville, which is close to Saint-Savin. They stopped with their plunder at an isolated house belonging to the Chaussard brothers, where the Chaussards' uncle, one Bourget, lived, who was knowing to the whole plot from its inception. This old man, aided by his wife, welcomed the brigands, charged them to make no noise, unloaded the bags of money, and gave the men something to drink. The wife performed the part of sentinel. The old man then took the horses through the wood, returned them to the driver, unbound the latter, and also the young men, who had been garotted. After resting for a time, Courceuil, Hiley, and Bois-laurier paid their men a paltry sum for their trouble, and the whole band departed, leaving the plunder in charge of Bourget.

When they reached a lonely place called Champ-Landry, these criminals, obeying the impulse which leads all malefactors into the blunders and miscalcu-

lations of crime, threw their guns into a wheat-field. This action, done by all of them, is a proof of their mutual understanding. Struck with terror at the boldness of their act, and even by its success, they dispersed.

The robbery now having been committed, with the additional features of assault and assassination, other facts and other actors appear, all connected with the robbery itself and with the disposition of the plunder.

Rifoël, concealed in Paris, whence he pulled every wire of the plot, transmits to Léveillé an order to send him instantly fifty thousand francs.

Courceuil, knowing to all the facts, sends Hiley to tell Léveillé of the success of the attempt, and say that he will meet him at Mortagne. Léveillé goes there.

Vauthier, on whose fidelity they think they can rely, agrees to go to Bourget, the uncle of the Chaussards, in whose care the money was left, and ask for the booty. The old man tells Vauthier that he must go to his nephews, who have taken large sums to the woman Bryond. But he orders him to wait outside in the road, and brings him a bag containing the small sum of twelve hundred francs, which Vauthier delivers to the woman Lechantre for her daughter.

At Léveillé's request, Vauthier returns to Bourget, who this time sends for his nephews. The elder Chaussard takes Vauthier to the wood, shows him a tree, and there they find a bag of one thousand francs buried in

the earth. Léveillé, Hiley, and Vauthier make other trips, obtaining only trifling sums compared with the large sum known to have been captured.

The woman Lechantre receives these sums at Mortagne; and, on receipt of a letter from her daughter, removes them to Saint-Savin, where the woman Bryond now returns.

This is not the moment to examine as to whether the woman Lechantre had any anterior knowledge of the plot.

It suffices to note here that this woman left Mortagne to go to Saint-Savin the evening before the crime; that after the crime she met her daughter on the high-road, and they both returned to Mortagne; that on the following day Léveillé, informed by Hiley of the success of the plot, goes from Alençon to Mortagne, and there visits the two women; later he persuades them to deposit the sums obtained with such difficulty from the Chaussards and Bourget in a house in Alençon, of which we shall speak presently, — that of the Sieur Pannier, merchant.

The woman Lechantre writes to the bailiff at Saint-Savin to come and drive her and her daughter by the cross-roads towards Alençon.

The funds now in their possession amount to twenty thousand francs; these the girl Godard puts into the carriage at night.

The notary Lèveillé had given exact instructions. The two women reach Alençon and stop at the house of a confederate, one Louis Chargegrain, in the Littray district. In spite of all the precautions of the notary, who came there to meet the women, witnesses were at hand who saw the portmanteaux and bags containing the money taken from the carriole.

At the moment when Courceuil and Hiley, disguised as women, were consulting in the square at Alençon with the Sieur Pannier (treasurer of the rebels since 1794, and devoted to Rifoël) as to the best means of conveying to Rifoël the sum he asked for, the woman Lechantre became alarmed on hearing at the inn where she stopped of the suspicions and arrests already made. She fled during the night, taking her daughter with her through the byways and cross-roads to Saint-Savin, in order to take refuge, if necessary, in certain hiding-places prepared at the château de Saint-Savin. The same fears assailed the other guilty persons. Courceuil, Boislaurier, and his relation Dubut, clandestinely changed two thousand francs in silver money for gold, and fled to Brittany and England.

On arriving at Saint-Savin, the women Lechantre and Bryond heard of the arrest of Bourget, that of the driver of the diligence, and that of the two refractories.

The magistrates and the gendarmerie struck such sure blows that it was thought advisable to place the

woman Bryond beyond the reach of justice ; for she appears to have been an object of great devotion on the part of these criminals, who were captivated by her. She left Saint-Savin, and was hidden at first in Alençon, where her followers deliberated, and finally placed her in the cellar of Pannier's house.

Here new incidents develop themselves.

After the arrest of Bourget and his wife, the Chaussards refuse to give up any more of the money, declaring themselves betrayed. This unexpected refusal was given at a moment when an urgent want of money was felt among the accomplices, if only for the purposes of escape. Rifoël was always clamorous for money. Hiley, Cibot, and Léveillé began to suspect the Chaussards.

Here comes in a new incident, which calls for the rigor of the law.

Two gendarmes, detailed to discover the woman Bryond, succeeded in tracking her to Pannier's. There a discussion is held ; and these men, unworthy of the trust reposed in them, instead of arresting the woman Bryond, succumb to her seductions. These unworthy soldiers, named Ratel and Mallet, showed this woman the utmost interest and offered to take her to the Chaussards and force them to make restitution.

The woman Bryond starts on horseback, disguised as a man, accompanied by Ratel, Mallet, and the girl

Godard. She makes the journey by night. She has a conference alone with one of the brothers Chaussard, an excited conference. She is armed with a pistol, and threatens to blow out the brains of her accomplice if he refuses the money. Then he goes with her into the forest, and they return with a heavy bag of coin. In the bag are copper coins and twelve-sous silver pieces to the amount of fifteen hundred francs.

When the woman Bryond returns to Alençon the accomplices propose to go in a body to the Chaussards' house and torture them until they deliver up the whole sum.

When Pannier hears of this failure he is furious. He threatens. The woman Bryond, though threatening him in return with Rifoël's wrath, is forced to fly.

These facts rest on the confession of Ratel.

Mallet, pitying the woman Bryond's position, offers her an asylum. Then Mallet and Ratel, accompanied by Hiley and Cibot, go at night to the brothers Chaussard; this time they find these brothers have left the place and have taken the rest of the money with them.

This was the last effort of the accomplices to recover the proceeds of the robbery.

It now becomes necessary to show the exact part taken by each of the actors in this crime.

Dubut, Boislaurier, Herbomez, Courceuil, and Hiley

were the ringleaders. Some deliberated and planned, others acted.

Boislaurier, Dubut, and Courceuil, all three fugitives from justice and outlawed, are addicted to rebellion, fomenters of trouble, implacable enemies of Napoleon the Great, his victories, his dynasty, and his government, haters of our new laws and of the constitution of the Empire.

Herbomez and Hiley audaciously executed that which the three former planned.

The guilt of the seven instruments of the crime, namely, Cibot, Lisieux, Grenier, Bruce, Horeau, Cabot, and Minard, is evident; it appears from the confessions of those of them who are now in the hands of justice; Lisieux died during the investigation, and Bruce has fled the country.

The conduct of Rousseau, who drove the coach, marks him as an accomplice. His slow method of driving, his haste at the entrance of the wood, his persistent declaration that his head was covered, whereas the passengers testify that the leader of the brigands told him to take the handkerchief off his head and recognize them; all these facts are strong presumptive evidence of collusion.

As for the woman Bryond and the notary Léveillé, could any co-operation be more connected, more continuous than theirs? They repeatedly furnished means

for the crime ; they were privy to it, and they abetted it. Léveillé travelled constantly. The woman Bryond invented scheme after scheme ; she risked all, even her life, to recover the plunder. She lent her house, her carriage ; her hand is seen in the plot from the beginning ; she did not dissuade the chief leader of all, Rifoël, since executed, although through her guilty influence upon him she might have done so. She made her waiting-woman, the girl Godard, an accomplice. As for Léveillé, he took an active part in the actual perpetration of the crime by seeking the axe the brigands asked for.

The woman Bourget, Vauthier, the Chaussards, Pannier, the woman Lechantre, Mallet and Ratel, all participated in the crime in their several degrees, as did the innkeepers Mélin, Binet, Laravinière, and Chargegrain.

Bourget has died during the investigation, after making a confession which removes all doubt as to the part played by Vauthier and the woman Bryond ; if he attempted to extenuate that of his wife and his nephew Chaussard, his motives are easy to understand.

The Chaussards knowingly fed and lodged the brigands, they saw them armed, they witnessed all their arrangements and knew the object of them ; and lastly, they received the plunder, which they hid, and as it appears, stole from their accomplices.

Pannier, the former treasurer of the rebels, concealed the woman Bryond in his house ; he is one of the most dangerous accomplices of this crime, which he knew from its inception. In him certain mysterious relations which are still obscure took their rise ; the authorities now have these matters under investigation. Pannier was the right hand of Rifoël, the depositary of the secrets of the counter-revolutionary party of the West ; he regretted that Rifoël introduced women into the plot and confided in them ; it was he who received the stolen money from the woman Bryond and conveyed it to Rifoël.

As for the conduct of the two gendarmes Ratel and Mallet, it deserves the severest penalty of the law. They betrayed their duty. One of them, foreseeing his fate, committed suicide, but not until he had made important revelations. The other, Mallet, denies nothing, his tacit admissions preclude all doubt, especially as to the guilt of the woman Bryond.

The woman Lechantre, in spite of her constant denials, was privy to all. The hypocrisy of this woman, who attempts to shelter her assumed innocence under the mask of a false piety, has certain antecedents which prove her decision of character and her intrepidity in extreme cases. She alleges that she was misled by her daughter, and believed that the plundered money belonged to the *Sieur Bryond*, — a

common excuse! If the *Sieur Bryond* had possessed any property, he would not have left the department on account of his debts. The woman *Lechantre* claims that she did not suspect a shameful theft, because she saw the proceedings approved by her ally, *Boislaurier*. But how does she explain the presence of *Rifoël* (already executed) at *Saint-Savin*; the journeys to and fro; the relations of that young man with her daughter; the stay of the brigands at *Saint-Savin*, where they were served by her daughter and the girl *Godard*? She alleges sleep; declares it to be her practice to go to bed at seven in the evening; and has no answer to make when the magistrate points out to her that if she rises, as she says she does, at dawn, she must have seen some signs of the plot, of the sojourn of so many persons, and of the nocturnal goings and comings of her daughter. To this she replies that she was occupied in prayer. This woman is a mass of hypocrisy. Lastly, her journey on the day of the crime, the care she takes to carry her daughter to *Mortagne*, her conduct about the money, her precipitate flight when all is discovered, the pains she is at to conceal herself, even the circumstances of her arrest, all go to prove a long-existing complicity. She has not acted like a mother who desires to save her daughter and withdraw her from danger, but like a trembling accomplice. And her complicity is not that of a misguided

tenderness ; it is the fruit of party spirit, the inspiration of a well-known hatred against the government of His Imperial and Royal Majesty. Misguided maternal tenderness, if that could be fairly alleged in her defence, would not, however, excuse it ; and we must not forget that consentment, long-standing and premeditated, is the surest sign of guilt.

Thus all the elements of the crime and the persons committing it are fully brought to light.

We see the madness of faction combining with pillage and greed ; we see assassination advised by party spirit, under whose ægis these criminals attempt to justify themselves for the basest crimes. The leaders give the signal for the pillage of the public money, which money is to be used for their ulterior crimes ; vile stipendiaries do this work for a paltry price, not recoiling from murder ; then the fomenters of rebellion, not less guilty because their own hands have neither robbed nor murdered, divide the booty and dispose of it. What community can tolerate such outrages ? The law itself is scarcely rigorous enough to duly punish them.

It is upon the above facts that this Court of Criminal and Special Justice is called upon to decide whether the prisoners Herbomez, Hiley, Cibot, Grenier, Horeau, Cabot, Minard, Melin, Binet, Laravinière, Rousseau, the woman Bryond, Léveillé, the woman Bourget, Vauthier, Chaussard the elder, Pannier, the widow

Lechantre, Mallet, all herein named and described, and arraigned before this court; also Boislaurier, Dubut, Courceuil, Bruce, the younger Chaussard, Chargegrain, and the girl Godard, — these latter being absent and fugitives from justice, — are or are not guilty of the crimes charged in this indictment.

Done at Caen, this 1st of December, 180—.

(Signed) BARON BOURLAC,
Attorney-General.

X.

PRAY FOR THOSE WHO DESPITEFULLY USE YOU AND
PERSECUTE YOU.

THIS legal paper, much shorter and more imperative than such indictments are in these days, when they are far more detailed and more precise, especially as to the antecedent life of accused persons, affected Godefroid deeply. The dryness of the statement in which the official pen narrated in red ink the principal details of the affair stirred his imagination. Concise, abbreviated narratives are to some minds texts into the hidden meaning of which they love to burrow.

In the middle of the night, aided by the silence, by the darkness, by the terrible relation intimated by the worthy Alaiu between the facts of that document and Madame de la Chanterie, Godefroid applied all the forces of his intellect to decipher the dreadful theme.

Evidently the name Lechantre stood for la Chanterie; in all probability the aristocracy of the name was intentionally thus concealed during the Revolution and under the Empire.

Godefroid saw, in imagination, the landscape and the scenes where the drama had taken place. The

forms and faces of the accomplices passed before his eyes. He pictured to himself not "one Rifoël" but a Chevalier du Vissard, a young man something like the Fergus of Walter Scott, a French Jacobite. He developed the romance of an ardent young girl grossly deceived by an infamous husband (a style of romance then much the fashion); loving the young and gallant leader of a rebellion against the Empire; giving herself, body and soul, like another Diana Vernon, to the conspiracy, and then, once launched on that fatal incline, unable to stop herself. Had she rolled to the scaffold?

The young man saw in his own mind a whole world, and he peopled it. He wandered in the shade of those Norman groves; he saw the Breton hero and Madame Bryond among the gorse and shrubbery; he inhabited the old château of Saint-Savin; he shared in the diverse acts of all those many personages, picturing to himself the notary, the merchant, and those bold Chouans. His mind conceived the state of that wild country where lingered still the memory of the Comtes de Bauvan, de Longuy, the exploits of Marche-à-Terre, the massacre at La Vivetière, the death of the Marquis de Montauran — of whose prowess Madame de la Chanterie had told him.

This sort of vision of things, of men, of places was rapid. When he remembered that this drama must

elate to the dignified, noble, deeply religious old woman whose virtue was acting upon him so powerfully as to be upon the point of metamorphosing him, Godefroid was seized with a sort of terror, and turned hastily to the second document which Monsieur Alain had given him. This was entitled : —

‘Summary on behalf of Madame Henriette Bryond des Tours-Minières, née Lechantre de la Chanterie.’

“No longer any doubt !” murmured Godefroid.

“We are condemned and guilty ; but if ever the overruler had reason to exercise his right of clemency is surely in a case like this.

“Here is a young woman, about to become a mother, and condemned to death.

“From a prison cell, with the scaffold before her, this woman will tell the truth.

“The trial before the Criminal Court of Alençon had, as in all cases where there are many accused persons in a conspiracy inspired by party-spirit, certain portions which were seriously obscure.

“The Chancellor of His Imperial and Royal Majesty knows now the truth about the mysterious personage named Le Marchand, whose presence in the department of the Orne was not denied by the government during the trial, but whom the prosecution did not think

proper to call as witness, and whom the defence had neither the power nor the opportunity to find.

“That personage is, as the prosecuting officer, the police of Paris, and the Chancellor of His Imperial and Royal Majesty well know, the Sieur Bernard-Polydor Bryond des Tours-Minières, the correspondent, since 1794, of the Comte de Lille, — known elsewhere as the Baron des Tours-Minières, and on records of the Parisian police under the name of Contenson.

“He is notorious. His youth and name were degraded by vices so imperative, an immorality so profound, conduct so criminal, that his infamous life must have ended on the scaffold if he had not possessed the ability to play a double part, as indicated by his names. Hereafter, as his passions rule him more and more, he will end by falling to the depths of infamy in spite of his incontestable ability and a remarkable mind.

“When the Comte de Lille became aware of this man’s character he no longer permitted him to take part in the royalist councils or to handle the money sent to France ; he thus lost the resources derived from these masters, whose service had been profitable to him.

“It was then that he returned to his country home, crippled with debt.

“His traitorous connection with the intrigues of England and the Comte de Lille, won him the confidence of the old families attached to the cause now

anquished by the genius of our immortal Emperor. He ere met one of the former leaders of the rebellion, with whom at the time of the expedition to Quiberon, and later, at the time of the last uprising of the 'houans, he had held certain relations as an envoy from England. He encouraged the schemes of this young agitator, Rifoël, who has since paid with his life in the scaffold for his plots against the State. Through him Bryond was able to penetrate once more into the secrets of that party which has misunderstood both the glory of H. M. the Emperor Napoleon I. and the true interests of the nation united in his august person.

"At the age of thirty-five, this man, then known under his true name of des Tours-Minières, affecting a sincere piety, professing the utmost devotion to the interests of the Comte de Lille and a reverence for the memory of the insurgents who lost their lives at the West, disguising with great ability the secrets of his exhausted youth, and powerfully protected by the silence of creditors, and by the spirit of caste which exists among all country *ci-devants*, — this man, truly a whited sepulchre, was introduced, as possessing every claim for consideration, to Madame Lechantre, who was supposed to be the possessor of a large fortune.

"All parties conspired to promote a marriage between the young Henriette, only daughter of Madame

Lechantre, and this protégé of the *ci-devants*. Priests, nobles, creditors, each with a different interest, loyal in some, selfish in others, blind for the most part, all united in furthering the union of Bernard Bryond des Tours-Minières with Henriette Lechantre.

“The good sense of the notary who had charge of Madame Lechantre’s affairs, and perhaps his distrust, were the actual cause of the disaster of this young girl. The Sieur Chesnel, notary at Alençon, put the estate of Saint-Savin, the sole property of the bride, under the dower system, reserving the right of habitation and a modest income to the mother.

“The creditors, who supposed, from Madame Lechantre’s orderly and frugal way of living, that she had capital laid by, were deceived in their expectations, and they then began suits which revealed the precarious financial condition of Bryond.

“Serious differences now arose between the newly married pair, and the young wife had occasion to know the depraved habits, the political and religious atheism and — shall I say the word ? — the infamy of the man to whom her life had been so fatally united. Bryond, forced to let his wife into the secret of the royalist plots, gave a home in his house to their chief agent, Rifoël du Vissard.

“The character of Rifoël, adventurous, brave, generous, exercised a charm on all who came in contact

with him, as was abundantly proved during his trials before three successive criminal courts.

“The irresistible influence, the absolute empire he acquired over the mind of a young woman who saw herself suddenly cast into the abyss of a fatal marriage, is not too visible in this catastrophe which now brings her suppliant to the foot of the Throne. But that which the Chancellor of His Imperial and Royal Majesty can easily verify is the infamous encouragement given by Bryond to this intimacy. Far from fulfilling his duty as guide and counsellor to a child whose poor deceived mother had trusted her to him, he took pleasure in drawing closer still the bonds that united the young Henriette to the rebel leader.

“The plan of this odious being, who takes pride in despising all things and considers nothing but the satisfaction of his passions, admitting none of the restraints imposed by civil or religious morality, was as follows:—

“We must first remark, however, that such plotting was familiar to a man who, ever since 1794 has played a double part, who for eight years deceived the Comte de Lille and his adherents, and probably deceived at the same time the police of the Republic and the Empire: such men belong only to those who pay them most.

“Bryond pushed Rifoël to crime; he instigated the attacks of armed men upon the mail-coaches bearing

the moneys of the government, and the levying of a heavy tribute from the purchasers of the National domain; a tax he enforced by means of tortures invented by him which carried terror through five departments. He then demanded that a sum of three hundred thousand francs derived from these plunderings be paid to him for the liquidation of his debts.

When he met with resistance on the part of his wife and Rifoël, and saw the contempt his proposal inspired in upright minds who were acting only from party spirit, he determined to bring them both under the rigor of the law on the next occasion of their committing a crime.

He disappeared, and returned to Paris, taking with him all information as to the then condition of the departments of the West.

The brothers Chaussard and Vauthier were, as the chancellor knows, Bryond's correspondents.

As soon as the attack was made on the diligence from Caen, Bryond returned secretly and in disguise, under the name of Le Marchand. He put himself into secret communication with the prefect and the magistrates. What was the result? Never was any conspiracy, in which a great number of persons took part, so rapidly discovered and dealt with. Within six days after the committal of the crime all the guilty persons were followed and watched with an intelligence which showed the most accurate knowledge of the plans, and of the individuals

concerned in them. The immediate arrest, trial, and execution of Rifoël and his accomplices are the proof of this. We repeat, the chancellor knows even more than we do on this subject.

If ever a condemned person had a right to appeal to the Sovereign's mercy it is Henriette Lechantre.

Though led astray by love, by ideas of rebellion which she sucked in with the milk that fed her, she is, most certainly, inexcusable in the eyes of the law; but in the eyes of the most magnanimous of emperors, will not her misfortunes, the infamous betrayal of her husband, and a rash enthusiasm plead for her?

The greatest of all captains, the immortal genius which pardoned the Prince of Hatzfeldt and is able to divine the reasons of the heart, will he not admit the fatal power of love, invincible in youth, which extenuates this crime, great as it was?

Twenty-two heads have fallen under the blade of the law; only one of the guilty persons is now left, and she a young woman, a minor, not twenty years of age. Will not the Emperor Napoleon the Great grant her life, and give her time in which to repent? Is not that to share the part of God?

For Henriette Lechantre, wife of Bryond des Tourfinières, —

Her defender, BORDIN,

*Barrister of the Lower Court of the Department
of the Seine.*

This dreadful drama disturbed the little sleep that Godefroid took. He dreamed of that penalty of death such as the physician Guillotin has made it with a philanthropic object. Through the hot vapors of a nightmare he saw a young woman, beautiful, enthusiastic, enduring the last preparations, drawn in that fatal tumbril, mounting the scaffold, and crying out, "Vive le roi!"

Eager to know the whole, Godefroid rose at dawn, dressed, and paced his room; then stood mechanically at his window gazing at the sky, while his thoughts reconstructed this drama in many volumes. Ever, on that darksome background of Chouans, peasants, country gentlemen, rebel leaders, spies, and officers of justice, he saw the vivid figures of the mother and the daughter detach themselves; the daughter misleading the mother; the daughter victim of a monster; victim, too, of her passion for one of those bold men whom, later, we have glorified as heroes, and to whom even Godefroid's imagination lent a likeness to the Charettes and the Georges Cadoudals, — those giants of the struggle between the Republic and the Monarchy.

As soon as Godefroid heard the goodman Alain stirring in the room above him, he went there; but he had no sooner opened the door than he closed it and went back to his own apartment. The old man, kneeling by his chair, was saying his morning prayer. The sight of

that whitened head, bowed in an attitude of humble reverence, reminded Godefroid of his own forgotten duties, and he prayed fervently.

"I expected you," said the kind old man, when Godefroid entered his room some fifteen minutes later. "I got up earlier than usual, for I felt sure you would be impatient."

"Madame Henriette?" asked Godefroid, with visible anxiety.

"Was Madame's daughter!" replied Monsieur Alain. "Madame's name is Lechantre de la Chanterie. Under the Empire none of the nobiliary titles were allowed, nor any of the names added to the patronymic or original names. Therefore, the Baronne des Tours-Minières was called Madame Bryond. The Marquis d'Esgrignon took his name of Carol (citizen Carol); later he was called the Sieur Carol. The Troisvilles became the Sieurs Guibelin."

"But what happened? Did the Emperor pardon her?"

"Alas, no!" replied Alain. "The unfortunate little woman, not twenty-one years old, perished on the scaffold. After reading Bordin's appeal, the Emperor answered very much in these terms: 'Why be so bitter against the spy? A spy is no longer a man; he ought not to have feelings; he is a wheel of the machinery; Bryond did his duty. If instruments of that kind were

not what they are, — steel bars, — and intelligent only in the service of the power employing them, government would not be possible. 'The sentences of criminal courts must be carried out, or the judges would cease to have confidence in themselves or in me. Besides, the women of the West must be taught not to meddle in plots. It is precisely in the case of a woman that justice should not be interfered with. There is no excuse possible for an attack on power?' This was the substance of what the Emperor said, as Bordin repeated it to me. Learning a little later that France and Russia were about to measure swords against each other, and that the Emperor was to go two thousand miles from Paris to attack a vast and desert country, Bordin understood the secret reason of the Emperor's harshness. To insure tranquillity at the West, now full of refractories, Napoleon believed it necessary to inspire terror. Bordin could do no more."

"But Madame de la Chanterie?" said Godefroid.

"Madame de la Chanterie was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment," replied Alain. "As she was already transferred to Bicêtre, near Rouen, to undergo her punishment, nothing was attempted on her behalf until every effort had been made to save Henriette, who had grown dearer than ever to her mother during this time of anxiety. Indeed, if it had not been for Bordin's assurance that he could obtain Henriette's pardon, it is

doubtful if Madame could have survived the shock of the sentence. When the appeal failed, they deceived the poor mother. She saw her daughter once after the execution of the other prisoners, not knowing that Madame Bryond's respite was due to a false declaration of pregnancy, made to gain time for the appeal."

"Ah! I understand it all now," exclaimed Godefroid.

"No, my dear child, there are things that no one can imagine. Madame thought her daughter living for a long time."

"How was that?"

"When Madame des Tours-Minières learned from Bordin that her appeal was rejected and that nothing could save her, that sublime little woman had the courage to write twenty letters, dating them month by month after the time of her execution, so as to make her poor mother in her prison believe she was alive. In those letters she told of a gradual illness which would end in death. They covered a period of two years. Madame de la Chanterie was therefore prepared for the news of her daughter's death, but she thought it a natural one. She did not know until 1814 that Henriette had died on the scaffold. For two years Madame was herded among the most depraved of her sex, but thanks to the urgency of the Champignelles and the Beauséants she was, after the second year, placed in a cell by herself, where she lived like a cloistered nun."

“And the others?” asked Godefroid.

“The notary Lèveillé, Herbomez, Hiley, Cibot, Grenier, Horcau, Cabot, Minard, and Mallet were condemned to death, and executed the same day. Pannier, condemned to hard labor for twenty years, was branded and sent to the galleys. The Chaussards and Vauthier received the same sentence, but were pardoned by the Emperor. Mèlin, Laravinière and Binet, were condemned to five years’ imprisonment. The woman Bourget to twenty years’ imprisonment. Chargegrain and Rousseau were acquitted. Those who escaped were all condemned to death, except the girl Godard, who was no other, as you have probably guessed, than our poor Manon —”

“Manon!” exclaimed Godefroid.

“Oh! you don’t know Manon yet,” replied the kind old Alain. “That devoted creature, condemned to twenty years’ imprisonment, gave herself up that she might take care of Madame de la Chanterie, and wait upon her. Our dear vicar was the priest at Mortagne who gave the last sacraments to the Baronne des Tours-Minières; he had the courage to go with her to the scaffold, and to him she gave her farewell kiss. That courageous, noble priest had also accompanied the Chevalier du Vissard. Our dear Abbé de Vèze has therefore known all the secrets of those days.”

“I see why his hair is so white,” said Godefroid.

“Alas! yes,” said Alain. “He received from Amé-

dée du Vissard a miniature of Madame des Tours-Minières, the only portrait of her that exists; therefore, the abbé became almost sacred in Madame de la Chanterie's eyes when she re-entered social existence."

"When did that happen?" asked Godefroid.

"Why, at the restoration of Louis XVIII., in 1814. The Marquis du Vissard, eldest brother of the Chevalier, was created peer of France and loaded with honors by the king. The brother of Monsieur d'Herbomez was made a count and receiver-general. The poor banker Pannier died of grief at the galleys. Boislaurier died without children, a lieutenant-general and governor of a royal château. Messieurs de Champignelles, de Beauséant, the Duc de Verneuil, and the Keeper of the Seals presented Madame de la Chanterie to the king. 'You have suffered greatly for me, madame la baronne; you have every right to my favor and gratitude,' he said to her. 'Sire,' she replied, 'your Majesty has so many sorrows to console that I do not wish that mine, which is inconsolable, should be a burden upon you. To live forgotten, to mourn my daughter, and do some good, that is my life. If anything could soften my grief, it is the kindness of my king, it is the pleasure of seeing that Providence has not allowed our long devotion to be useless.'"

"And what did Louis XVIII. do?" asked Godefroid.

"He restored two hundred thousand francs in money

to Madame de la Chanterie, for the estate of Saint-Savin had been sold to pay the costs of the trial. In the decree of pardon issued for Madame la baronne and her servant the king expressed regret for the suffering borne in his cause, adding that ‘the zeal of his servants had gone too far in its methods of execution.’ But—and this is a horrible thing; it will serve to show you a curious trait in the character of that monarch—he employed Bryond in his detective police throughout his reign.”

“Oh, kings! kings!” cried Godefroid; “and is the wretch still living?”

“No; the wretch, as you justly call him, who concealed his real name under that of Contenson, died about the close of the year 1829 or the beginning of 1830. In trying to arrest a criminal who escaped over a roof, he fell into the street. Louis XVIII. shared Napoleon’s ideas as to spies and police. Madame de la Chanterie is a saint; she prays constantly for the soul of that man and has two masses said yearly for him. As I have already told you, Madame de la Chanterie knew nothing of the dangers her daughter was incurring until the day when the money was carried to Alençon; nevertheless she was unable to establish her innocence, although defended by one of the greatest lawyers of that time. The president, du Ronceret, and the vice-president, Blondet, of the court of Alençon did their best to save

our poor lady. But the influence of the councillor of the Imperial Court who presided at her trial before the Criminal and Special Court, the famous Mergi, and that of Bourlac the attorney-general was such over the other judges that they obtained her condemnation. Both Bourlac and Mergi showed extraordinary bitterness against mother and daughter; they called the Baronne des Tours-Minières 'the woman Bryond,' and Madame 'the woman Lechantre.' The names of accused persons in those days were all brought to one republican level, and were sometimes unrecognizable. The trial had several very extraordinary features, which I cannot now recall; one piece of audacity remains in my memory which will serve to show you what sort of men those Chouans were. The crowd which assembled to hear the trial was immense; it even filled the corridors and the square before the court-house. One morning, after the opening of the court-room and before the arrival of the judges, Pille-Miche, a famous Chouan, sprang over the balustrade into the middle of the crowd, elbowing right and left, 'charging like a wild boar,' as Bordin told me, through the frightened people. The guards and the gendarmes dashed after him and caught him just as he reached the square; after that the guards were doubled. A picket of gendarmerie was stationed in the square, for they feared there were Chouans on the ground ready to rescue the prisoners. As it was,

three persons were crushed to death on this occasion. It was afterwards discovered that Contenson (neither my friend Bordin nor I could ever bring ourselves to call him the Baron des Tours-Minières, nor Bryond which is the name of an old family), — it was, I say, discovered that this wretch Contenson had obtained sixty thousand francs of the stolen money from the Chaussards; he gave ten thousand to the younger Chaussard, whom he took with him into the detective police and inoculated with his vices; his other accomplices got nothing from him. Madame de la Chanterie invested the money restored to her by the king in the public Funds, and bought this house to please her uncle, Monsieur de Boisfrelon, who gave her the money for the purchase, and died in the rooms you now occupy. This tranquil neighborhood is near the archbishop's palace, where our dear abbé has duties with the cardinal. That was one of the chief reasons why Madame agreed to her uncle's wish. Here, in this cloistral life, the fearful misfortunes which overwhelmed her for twenty-six years have been brought to a close. Now you can understand the majesty, the grandeur of this victim — august, I venture to call her."

"Yes," said Godefroid, "the imprint of all the blows she has received remains and gives her something, I can scarcely describe it, that is grand and majestic."

"Every wound, every fresh blow, has increased her

patience, her resignation," continued Alain; "but if you knew her as we know her you would see how keen is her sensibility, how active the inexhaustible tenderness of her heart, and you would almost stand in awe of the tears she had shed, and the fervent prayers she makes to God. Ah! it was necessary to have known, as she did, a brief period of happiness to bear up as she has done under such misfortunes. Hers is a tender heart, a gentle soul in a steel body hardened by privations, by toil, by austerities."

"Her life explains why hermits live so long," said Godefroid.

"There are days when I ask myself what is the meaning of a life like hers? Can it be that God reserves such trials, such cruel tests, for those of his creatures who are to sit on the morrow of their death at his right hand?" said the good Alain, quite unconscious that he was artlessly expressing the whole doctrine of Swedenborg on the angels.

"And you tell me," said Godefroid, "that in prison Madame de la Chanterie was put with —"

"Madame was sublime in her prison," said Alain. "For three whole years she realized the story of the Vicar of Wakefield, and was able to convert many of the worst women about her. During her imprisonment she observed the habits and customs of these women, and was seized with that great pity for the sorrows of the

people which has since filled her soul and made her the angel of Parisian charity. In that dreadful Bicêtre of Rouen, she conceived the plan to the realization of which we are now devoted. It was, she has often told us, a delightful dream, an angelic inspiration in the midst of hell; though she never thought she should realize it. When, in 1819, peace and quietude seemed really to return to Paris, her dream came back to her. Madame la Duchesse d'Angoulême, afterwards the dauphine, the Duchesse de Berry, the archbishop, later the chancellor, and several pious persons contributed liberally the first necessary sums. These funds have been increased by the addition of our own available property, from which we take only enough for our actual needs."

Tears came into Godefroid's eyes.

"We are the ministers of a Christian idea; we belong body and soul to its work, the spirit of which, the founder of which, is the Baronne de la Chanterie, whom you hear us so respectfully call 'Madame.'"

"Ah! let me belong to you!" cried Godefroid, stretching out his hands to the kind old man.

"Now you understand why there are some subjects of conversation which are never mentioned here, nor even alluded to. You can now see the obligations of delicacy that all who live in this house contract towards one who seems to us a saint. You comprehend — do you not? —

the influence of a woman made sacred by such sorrows, who knows so many things, to whom anguish has said its utmost word; who from each adversity has drawn instruction, in whom all virtues have the double strength of cruel trial and of constant practice; whose soul is spotless and without reproach, whose motherhood knew only grief, whose married love knew only bitterness; on whom life smiled for a brief time only, but for whom heaven reserves a palm, the reward of resignation and of loving-kindness under sorrow. Ah! does she not even triumph over Job in never murmuring? Can you wonder that her words are so powerful, her old age so young, her soul so communicative, her glance so convincing? She has obtained extraordinary powers in dealing with sufferers, for she has suffered all things."

"She is the living image of Charity!" cried Godcfroid, fervently. "Can I ever be one of you?"

"You must first endure the tests, and above all BELIEVE!" said the old man, gently. "So long as you have no faith, so long as you have not absorbed into your heart and mind the divine meaning of Saint Paul's epistle upon Charity, you cannot share our work."

SECOND EPISODE

THE INITIATE.

XI.

THE POLICE OF THE GOOD GOD.

LIKE evil, good is contagious. Therefore when Madame de la Chanterie's lodger had lived in that old and silent house for some months after the worthy Alain's last confidence, which gave him the deepest respect for the religious lives of those among whom his was cast, he experienced that well-being of the soul which comes of a regulated existence, gentle customs, and harmony of nature in those who surround us. At the end of four months, during which time Godefroid heard neither a loud voice nor an argument, he could not remember that he had ever been, if not as happy, at least as tranquil and contented. He now judged soundly of the world, seeing it from afar. At last, the desire he had felt for months to be a sharer in the work of these mysterious persons became a passion.

Without being great philosophers we can all understand the force which passions acquire in solitude.

Thus it happened that one day — a day made solemn by the power of the spirit within him — Godefroid again went up to see the good old Alain, him whom Madame de la Chanterie called her “lamb,” the member of the community who seemed to Godefroid the least imposing, the most approachable member of the fraternity, intending to obtain from him some definite light on the conditions of the sacred work to which these brothers of God were dedicated. The allusions made to a period of trial seemed to imply an initiation, which he was now desirous of receiving. His curiosity had not been satisfied by what the venerable old man had already told him as to the causes which led to the work of Madame de la Chanterie; he wanted to know more.

For the third time Godefroid entered Monsieur Alain's room, just as the old man was beginning his evening reading of the “Imitation of Jesus Christ.” This time the kindly soul did not restrain a smile when he saw the young man, and he said at once, without allowing Godefroid to speak: —

“Why do you come to me, my dear boy; why not go to Madame? I am the most ignorant, the most imperfect, the least spiritual of our number. For the last three days,” he added, with a shrewd little

glance, "Madame and my other friends have read your heart."

"What have they read there?" asked Godefroid.

"Ah!" replied the goodman, without evasion, "they see in you a rather artless desire to belong to our little flock. But this sentiment is not as yet an ardent vocation. Yes," he continued, replying to a gesture of Godefroid's, "you have more curiosity than fervor. You are not yet so detached from your old ideas that you do not look forward to something adventurous, romantic, as they say, in the incidents of our life."

Godefroid could not keep himself from blushing.

"You see a likeness between our occupations and those of the caliphs of the 'Arabian Nights;' and you are thinking about the satisfaction you will have in playing the part of the good genii in the tales of benevolence you are inventing. Ah, my dear boy! that shame-faced laugh of yours proves to me that we were quite right in that conjecture. How do you expect to conceal any feeling from persons whose business it is to divine the most hidden motion of souls, the tricks of poverty, the calculations of indigence,—honest spies, the police of the good God; old judges, whose code contains nothing but absolutions; doctors of suffering, whose only remedy is oftentimes the wise application of money? But, you see, my child, we don't wish to quarrel with the motives which bring us

a neophyte, provided he will really stay and become a brother of the order. We shall judge you by your work. There are two kinds of curiosity, — that of good and that of evil; just at this moment you have that of good. If you should work in our vineyard, the juice of our grapes will make you perpetually thirsty for the divine fruit. The initiation is, as in that of all natural knowledge, easy in appearance, difficult in reality. Benevolence is like poesy; nothing is easier than to catch the appearance of it. But here, as in Parnassus, nothing contents us but perfection. To become one of us, you must acquire a great knowledge of life. And what a life, — good God! Parisian life, which defies the sagacity of the minister of police and all his agents! We have to circumvent the perpetual conspiracy of Evil, master it in all its forms, while it changes so often as to seem infinite. Charity in Paris must know as much as vice, just as a policeman must know all the tricks of thieves. We must each be frank and each distrustful; we must have quick perception and a sure and rapid judgment. And then, my child, we are old and getting older; but we are so content with the results we have now obtained, that we do not want to die without leaving successors in the work. If you persist in your desire, you will be our first pupil, and all the dearer to us on that account. There is no risk for us, because God brought you to

us. Yours is a good nature soured; since you have been here the evil leaven has weakened. The divine nature of Madame has acted upon yours. Yesterday we took counsel together; and inasmuch as I have your confidence, my good brothers resolved to give me to you as guardian and teacher. Does that please you?"

"Ah! my kind Monsieur Alain, your eloquence awakens —"

"No, my child, it is not I who speak well; it is things that are eloquent. We can be sure of being great, even sublime, in obeying God, in imitating Jesus Christ, — imitating him, I mean, as much as men are able to do so, aided by faith."

"This moment, then, decides my life!" cried Godefroid. "I feel within me the fervor of a neophyte; I wish to spend my life in doing good."

"That is the secret of remaining in God," replied Alain. "Have you studied our motto, — *Transire benefaciendo*? *Transire* means to go beyond this world, leaving benefits on our way."

"Yes, I have understood it; I have put the motto of the order before my bed."

"That is well; it is a trifling action, but it counts for much in my eyes. And now I have your first affair, your first duel with misery, prepared for you; I'll put your foot into the stirrup. We are about to part. Yes,

I myself am detached from the convent, to live for a time in the crater of a volcano. I am to be a clerk in a great manufactory, where the workmen are infected with communistic doctrines, and dream of social destruction, the abolishment of masters, — not knowing that that would be the death of industry, of commerce, of manufactures. I shall stay there goodness knows how long, — perhaps a year, — keeping the books and paying the wages. This will give me an entrance into a hundred or a hundred and twenty homes of working-men, misled, no doubt, by poverty, even before the pamphlets of the day misled them. But you and I can see each other on Sundays and fête-days. We shall be in the same quarter; and if you come to the church of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas, you will find me there any day at half-past seven, when I hear mass. If you meet me elsewhere don't recognize me, unless you see me rub my hands like a man who is pleased at something. That is one of our signs. We have a language of signs, like the deaf and dumb; you'll soon find out the absolute necessity of it."

Godefroid made a gesture which the goodman Alain interpreted; for he laughed, and immediately went on to say: —

"Now for your affair. We do not practise either the benevolence or the philanthropy that you know about, which are really divided into several branches, all taken

advantage of by sharpers in charity as a business. We practise charity as our great and sublime Saint Paul defines it; for, my dear lad, we think that charity, and charity alone, which is Love, can heal the wounds of Paris. In our eyes, misery, of whatever kind, poverty, suffering, misfortune, grief, evil, no matter how produced, or in what social class they show themselves, have equal rights. Whatever his opinions or beliefs, an unhappy man is, before all else, an unhappy man; and we ought not to attempt to turn his face to our holy mother Church until we have saved him from despair or hunger. Moreover, we ought to convert him to goodness more by example and by gentleness than by any other means; and we believe that God will specially help us in this. All constraint is bad. Of the manifold Parisian miseries, the most difficult to discover, and the bitterest, is that of worthy persons of the middle classes who have fallen into poverty; for they make concealment a point of honor. Those sorrows, my dear Godefroid, are to us the object of special solicitude. Such persons usually have intelligence and good hearts. They return to us, sometimes with usury, the sums that we lend them. Such restitutions recoup us in the long run for the losses we occasionally incur through impostors, shiftless creatures, or those whom misfortunes have rendered stupid. Through such persons we often obtain valuable help in our investigations. Our work has now

become so vast, its details are so multifarious, that we no longer suffice of ourselves to carry it on. So, for the last year we have a physician of our own in every arrondissement in Paris. Each of us takes general charge of four arrondissements. We pay each physician three thousand francs a year to take care of our poor. His time belongs to us in the first instance, but we do not prevent him from attending other sick persons if he can. Would you believe that for many months we were unable to find twelve really trustworthy, valuable men, in spite of all our own efforts and those of our friends? We could not employ any but men of absolute discreteness, pure lives, sound knowledge, experience, active men, and lovers of doing good. Now, although there are in Paris some ten thousand individuals, more or less, who would gladly do the work, we could not find twelve to meet our needs in a whole year."

"Our Saviour had difficulty in gathering his apostles, and even then a traitor and an unbeliever got among them," said Godefroid.

"However, within the last month all our arrondissements are provided with a Visitor—that is the name we give to our physicians. At the same time the business is increasing, and we have all redoubled our activity. If I confide to you these secrets of our system, it is that you must know the physician, that is,

the Visitor of the arrondissement to which we are about to send you ; from him, all original information about our cases comes. This Visitor is named Berton, Doctor Berton ; he lives in the rue d'Enfer. And now here are the facts : Doctor Berton is attending a lady whose disease puzzles and defies science. That, of course, is not our concern, but that of the Faculty. Our business is to discover the condition of the family of this patient ; Doctor Berton suspects that their poverty is frightful, and concealed with a pride and determination which demand our utmost care. Until now, my son, I should have found time for this case, but the work I am now undertaking obliges me to find a helper in my four arrondissements, and you shall be that helper. This family lives in the rue Notre-Dame des Champs, in a house at the corner of the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse. You will find a room to let in the same house, where you can live for a time so as to discover the truth about these persons. Be sordid for yourself, but as for the money you may think needed for this case have no uneasiness. I will remit you such sums as we may judge necessary after ourselves considering all the circumstances. But remember that you must study the moral qualities of these unfortunates : their hearts, the honorableness of their feelings ; those are our guarantees. Miserly we may be for ourselves, and generous to those who suffer, but we must be prudent and even

calculating, for we are dealing with the money of the poor. So then, to-morrow morning you can start; think over the power we put in your hands: the brothers are with you in heart."

"Ah!" cried Godefroid, "you have given me such a pleasure in the opportunity of doing good and making myself worthy to belong to you some day, that I shall not sleep to-night."

"One more word, my child. I told you not to recognize me without the signal; the same rule applies to the other gentlemen and to Madame, and even to the people you see about this house. We are forced to keep up an absolute incognito in all we do; this is so necessary to our enterprises that we have made a rule about it. We seek to be ignored, lost in this great Paris. Remember also, my dear Godefroid, the spirit of our order; which is, never to appear as benefactors, to play an obscure part, that of intermediaries. We always present ourselves as the agent of a pious, saintly person (in fact, we are working for God), so that none of those we deal with may feel the obligation of gratitude towards any of us, or think we are wealthy persons. True, sincere humility, not the false humility of those who seek thereby to be set in the light, must inspire you and rule all your thoughts. You may indeed be glad when you succeed; but so long as you feel within you a sentiment of vanity or of pride, you are

not worthy to do the work of the order. We have known two perfect men: one, who was one of our founders, Judge Popinot; the other is revealed by his works; he is a country doctor whose name is written on the annals of his canton. That man, my dear Godefroid, is one of the greatest men of our time; he brought a whole region out of wretchedness into prosperity, out of irreligion into Christianity, out of barbarism into civilization.¹ The names of those two men are graven on our hearts and we have taken them as our models. We should be happy indeed if we ourselves could some day acquire in Paris the influence that country doctor had in his canton. But here, the sore is vast, beyond our strength at present. May God preserve to us Madame, may he send us some young helpers like you, and perhaps we may yet leave behind us an institution worthy of his divine religion. And now good-bye; your initiation begins — Ah! I chatter like a professor and forget the essential thing! Here is the address of that family," he added, giving Godefroid a piece of paper; "I have added the number of Dr. Berton's house in the rue d'Enfer; and now, go and pray to God to help you."

Godefroid took the old man's hands and pressed them tenderly, wishing him good-night, and assuring him he would not neglect a single point of his advice.

¹ The Country Doctor. Roberts Bros. Boston.

“All that you have said to me,” he added, “is graven in my memory forever.”

The old man smiled, expressing no doubts ; then he rose, to kneel in his accustomed place. Godefroid retired, joyful in at last sharing the mysteries of that house and in having an occupation, which, feeling as he did then, was to him an untold pleasure.

The next day at breakfast, Monsieur Alain's place was vacant, but no one remarked upon it ; Godefroid made no allusion to the cause of his absence, neither did any one question him as to the mission the old man had entrusted to him ; he thus took his first lesson in discreetness. Nevertheless, after breakfast, he did take Madame de la Chanterie apart and told her that he should be absent for some days.

“That is good, my child,” replied Madame de la Chanterie ; “try to do honor to your godfather, who has answered for you to his brothers.”

Godefroid bade adieu to the three remaining brethren, who made him an affectionate bow, by which they seemed to bless his entrance upon a painful career.

ASSOCIATION, one of the greatest social forces, and that which made the Europe of the middle-ages, rests on principles which, since 1792, no longer exist in France, where the Individual has now triumphed over the State. Association requires, in the first place, a self-devotion that is not understood in our day ; also a guileless faith

which is contrary to the spirit of the nation, and lastly, a discipline against which men in these days revolt and which the Catholic religion alone can enforce. The moment an association is formed among us, each member, returning to his own home from an assembly where noble sentiments have been proclaimed, thinks of making his own bed out of that collective devotion, that union of forces, and of milking to his own profit the common cow, which, not being able to supply so many individual demands, dies exhausted.

Who knows how many generous sentiments were blasted, how many fruitful germs may have perished, lost to the nation through the infamous deceptions of the French Carbonari, the patriotic subscriptions to the Champ d'Asile, and other political deceptions which ought to have been grand and noble dramas, and proved to be the farces and the melodramas of police courts. It is the same with industrial association as it is with political association. Love of self is substituted for the love of collective bodies. The corporations and the Hanse leagues of the middle-ages, *to which we shall some day return*, are still impossible. Consequently, the only societies which actually exist are those of religious bodies, against whom a heavy war is being made at this moment ; for the natural tendency of sick persons is to quarrel with remedies and often with physicians. France ignores self-abnegation. There-

fore, no association can live except through religious sentiment; the only sentiment that quells the rebellions of mind, the calculations of ambition, and greeds of all kinds. The seekers of better worlds ignore the fact that ASSOCIATION has such worlds to offer.

As he walked through the streets Godefroid felt himself another man. Whoever could have looked into his being would have admired the curious phenomenon of the communication of collective power. He was no longer a mere man, he was a tenfold force, knowing himself the representative of persons whose united forces upheld his actions and walked beside him. Bearing that power in his heart, he felt within him a plenitude of life, a noble might, which uplifted him. It was, as he afterwards said, one of the finest moments of his whole existence; he was conscious of a new sense, an omnipotence more sure than that of despots. Moral power is, like thought, limitless.

“To live for others,” he thought, “to act with others, all as one, and act alone as all together, to have for leader Charity, the noblest, the most living of those ideal figures Christianity has made for us, this is indeed to live! — Come, come, repress that petty joy, which father Alain laughed at. And yet, how singular it is that in seeking to set myself aside from life I have found the power I have sought so long! Yes, the world of misery will belong to me!”

XII.

A CASE TO INVESTIGATE.

GODEFROID walked from the cloister of Notre-Dame to the avenue de l'Observatoire in such a state of exaltation that he never noticed the length of the way.

When he reached the rue Notre-Dame des Champs at the point where it joins the rue de l'Ouest he was amazed to find (neither of these streets being paved at the time of which we write) great mud-holes in that fine open quarter. Persons walked on planks laid down beside the houses and along the marshy gardens, or on narrow paths flanked on each side by stagnant water which sometimes turned them into rivulets.

By dint of searching he found the house he wanted, but he did not reach it without difficulty. It was evidently an abandoned factory. The building was narrow and the side of it was a long wall with many windows and no architectural decoration whatever. None of these windows, which were square, were on the lower floor, where there was no opening but a very miserable entrance-door.

Godefroid supposed that the proprietor had turned the building into a number of small tenements to make it profitable, for a written placard above the door stated that there were "Several rooms to let." Godefroid rang, but no one came. While he was waiting, a person who went by pointed out to him that the house had another entrance on the boulevard where he might get admittance.

Godefroid followed this advice and saw at the farther end of a little garden which extended along the boulevard a second door to the house. The garden, rather ill-kept, sloped downward, for there was enough difference in level between the boulevard and the rue Notre-Dame des Champs to make it a sort of ditch. Godefroid therefore walked along one of the paths, at the end of which he saw an old woman whose dilapidated garments were in keeping with the house.

"Was it you who rang at the other door?" she asked.

"Yes, madame. Do you show the lodgings?"

On the woman's replying that she did, Godefroid inquired if the other lodgers were quiet persons; his occupations, he said, were such that he needed silence and peace; he was a bachelor and would be glad to arrange with the portress to do his housekeeping.

On this suggestion, the portress assumed a gracious manner.

"Monsieur has fallen on his feet in coming, here, then," she said; "except on the Chaumière days the boulevard is as lonely as the Pontine marshes."

"Ah! you know the Pontine marshes?" said Godefroid.

"No, monsieur, I don't; but I've got an old gentleman upstairs whose daughter seems to get her living by being ill, and he says that; I only repeat it. The poor old man will be glad to know that monsieur likes quiet, for a noisy neighbor, he thinks, would kill his daughter. On the second floor we have two writers; they don't come in till midnight, and are off before eight in the morning. They say they are authors, but I don't know where or when they write."

While speaking, the portress was showing Godefroid up one of those horrible stairways of brick and wood so ill put together that it is hard to tell whether the wood is trying to get rid of the bricks or the bricks are trying to get away from the wood; the gaps between them were partly filled up by what was dust in summer and mud in winter. The walls, of cracked and broken plaster, presented to the eye more inscriptions than the Academy of Belles-lettres has yet composed. The portress stopped on the first landing.

"Here, monsieur, are two rooms adjoining each other and very clean, which open opposite to those of Monsieur Bernard; that's the old gentleman I told

you of, — quite a proper person. He is decorated ; but it seems he has had misfortunes, for he never wears his ribbon. They formerly had a servant from the provinces, but they sent him away about three years ago ; and now the young son of the lady does everything, housework and all.”

Godefroid made a gesture.

“ Oh ! ” cried the portress, “ don’t you be afraid ; they won’t say anything to you ; they never speak to any one. They came here after the Revolution of July, in 1830. I think they ’re provincial folk ruined by the change of government ; they are proud, I tell you ! and dumb as fishes. For three years, monsieur, I declare they have not let me do the smallest thing for them for fear they should have to pay for it. A hundred sons on New Year’s day, that’s all I get out of them. Talk to me of authors, indeed ! ”

This gossip made Godefroid hope he should get some assistance out of the woman, who presently said, while praising the healthfulness of the two rooms she offered him, that she was not a portress, but the confidential agent of the proprietor, for whom she managed many of the affairs of the house.

“ You may have confidence in me, monsieur, that you may ! Madame Vauthier, it is well known, would rather have nothing than a single penny that ought to go to others.”

Madame Vauthier soon came to terms with Godefroid who would not take the rooms unless he could have them by the single month and furnished. These miserable rooms of students and unlucky authors were rented furnished or unfurnished as the case might be. The vast garret which extended over the whole building was filled with such furniture. But Monsieur Bernard, she said, had furnished his own rooms.

In making Madame Vauthier talk, Godefroid discovered she had intended to keep boarders in the building, but for the last five years had not obtained a single lodger of that description. She lived herself on the ground-floor facing towards the boulevard; and looked after the whole house, by the help of a huge mastiff, a stout servant-girl, and a lad who blacked the boots, took care of the rooms, and did the errands.

These two poor servants were, like herself, in keeping with the poverty of the house, that of the tenants, and the wild and tangled look of the garden. Both were children abandoned by their parents to whom the widow gave food for wages, — and what food! The lad, whom Godefroid caught a glimpse of, wore a ragged blouse and list slippers instead of shoes, and sabots when he went out. With his tousled head, looking like a sparrow when it takes a bath, and his black hands, he went to measure wood at a wood-yard on the boulevard as soon as he had finished the morning work of the

house ; and after his day's labor (which ends in wood-yards at half-past four in the afternoon) he returned to his domestic avocations. He went to the fountain of the Observatoire for the water used in the house, which the widow supplied to the tenants, together with bundles of kindling, sawed and tied up by him.

Népomucène, such was the name of the widow Vauthier's slave, brought the daily journal to his mistress. In summer the poor forsaken lad was a waiter in the wine-shops at the barrier ; and then his mistress dressed him properly.

As for the stout girl, she cooked under direction of the widow, and helped her in another department of industry during the rest of the day ; for Madame Vauthier had a business, — she made list shoes, which were bought and sold by pedlers.

Godefroid learned all these details in about an hour's time ; for the widow took him everywhere, and showed him the whole building, explaining its transformation into a dwelling. Until 1828 it had been a nursery for silk-worms, less for the silk than to obtain what they call the eggs. Eleven acres planted with mulberries on the plain of Montrouge, and three acres on the rue de l'Ouest, afterwards built over, had supplied this singular establishment.

Just as the widow was explaining to Godefroid how Monsieur Barbet, having lent money to an Italian

named Fresconi, the manager of the business, could recover his money only by foreclosing a mortgage on the building and seizing the three acres on the rue Notre-Dame des Champs, a tall, spare old man with snow-white hair appeared at the end of the street which leads into the square of the rue de l'Ouest.

"Ah! here he comes, just in time!" cried the Vauthier; "that's your neighbor, Monsieur Bernard. Monsieur Bernard!" she called out as soon as the old man was within hearing; "you won't be alone any longer; here is a gentleman who has hired the rooms opposite to yours."

Monsieur Bernard turned his eyes on Godefroid with an apprehension it was easy to fathom; the look seemed to say: "The misfortune I feared has come to pass."

"Monsieur," he said aloud, "do you intend to live here?"

"Yes, monsieur," said Godefroid, honestly. "It is not a resort for the fortunate of this earth and it is the least expensive place I can find in the quarter. Madame Vauthier does not pretend to lodge millionnaires. Adieu, for the present, my good Madame Vauthier, and have everything ready for me at six o'clock this evening; I shall return punctually."

Godefroid turned toward the square of the rue de l'Ouest, walking slowly, for the anxiety depicted on

the face of the tall old man made him think that he would follow him and come to an explanation. And, in fact, after an instant's hesitation Monsieur Bernard turned round and retraced his steps so as to overtake Godefroid.

"The old villain! he'll prevent him from returning," thought Madame Vauthier; "that's the second time he has played me the same trick. Patience! patience! five days hence he owes his rent, and if he does n't pay sharp up I'll turn him out. Monsieur Barbet is a kind of a tiger one must n't offend, and — But I would like to know what he's telling him. Félicité! Félicité, you great gawk! where are you?" cried the widow in her rasping, brutal voice, — she had been using her dulcet tones to Godefroid.

The servant-girl, stout, squint-eyed, and red-haired, ran out.

"Keep your eye on things, do you hear me? I shall be back in five minutes."

And Madame Vauthier, formerly cook to the publisher Barbet, one of the hardest lenders of money by the week, slipped along behind her two tenants so as to be able to overtake Godefroid as soon as his conversation with Monsieur Bernard came to an end.

Monsieur Bernard walked slowly, like a man who is undecided, or like a debtor seeking for excuses to placate a creditor who has just left him with threats.

Godefroid, though some distance in front, saw him while pretending to look about and examine the locality. It was not, therefore, till they reached the middle of the great alley of the garden of the Luxembourg that Monsieur Bernard came up to the young man.

“Pardon me, monsieur,” said Monsieur Bernard, bowing to Godefroid, who returned his bow. “A thousand pardons for stopping you without having the honor of your acquaintance; but is it really your intention to take lodgings in that horrible house you have just left?”

“But, monsieur —”

“Yes, yes,” said the old man, interrupting Godefroid, with a gesture of authority. “I know that you may well ask me by what right I meddle in your affairs and presume to question you. Hear me, monsieur; you are young and I am old; I am older than my years, and they are sixty-seven; people take me for eighty. Age and misfortunes justify many things; but I will not make a plea of my whitened head; I wish to speak of yourself. Do you know that this quarter in which you propose to live is deserted by eight o’clock at night, and the roads are full of dangers, the least of which is robbery? Have you noticed those wide spaces not yet built upon, these fields, these gardens? You may tell me that I live here; but, monsieur, I never go out after six o’clock. You may also remind me of

the two young men on the second floor, above the apartment you are going to take. But, monsieur, those two poor men of letters are pursued by creditors. They are in hiding; they are away in the daytime and only return at night; they have no reason to fear robbers or assassins; besides, they always go together and are armed. I myself obtained permission from the prefecture of police that they should carry arms."

"Monsieur," said Godefroid, "I am not afraid of robbers, for the same reasons that make those gentlemen invulnerable; and I despise life so heartily that if I were murdered by mistake I should bless the murderer!"

"You do not look to me very unhappy," said the old man, examining Godefroid.

"I have, at the most, enough to get me bread to live on; and I have come to this place, monsieur, because of its silent neighborhood. May I ask you what interest you have in driving me away?"

The old man hesitated; he saw Madame Vauthier close behind them. Godefroid, who examined him attentively, was astonished at the degree of thinness to which grief, perhaps hunger, perhaps toil, had reduced him. There were signs of all those causes upon that face, where the parched skin clung to the bones as if it had been burned by the sun of Africa. The dome of the forehead, high and threatening, overshadowed a

pair of steel-blue eyes, — two cold, hard, sagacious, penetrating eyes, like those of savages, surrounded by a black and wrinkled circle. The large nose, long and very thin, and the prominent chin, gave the old man a strong resemblance to the well-known mask popularly ascribed to Don Quixote ; but a wicked Don Quixote, without illusions, — a terrible Don Quixote.

And yet the old man, in spite of this general aspect of severity, betrayed the weakness and timidity which indigence imparts to all unfortunates. These two emotions seemed to have made crevices in that solidly constructed face which the pickaxe of poverty was daily enlarging. The mouth was eloquent and grave ; in that feature Don Quixote was complicated with Montesquieu's president.

His clothing was entirely of black cloth, but cloth that was white at the seams. The coat, of an old-fashioned cut, and the trousers, showed various clumsy darns. The buttons had evidently just been renewed. The coat, buttoned to the chin, showed no linen ; and the cravat, of a rusty black, hid the greater part of a false collar. These clothes, worn for many years, smelt of poverty. And yet the lofty air of this mysterious old man, his gait, the thought that dwelt on his brow and was manifest in his eyes, excluded the idea of pauperism. An observer would have hesitated how to class him,

Monsieur Bernard seemed so absorbed that he might have been taken for a teacher employed in that quarter of the city, or for some learned man plunged in exacting and tyrannical meditation. Godefroid, in any case, would have felt a curiosity which his present mission of benevolence sharpened into powerful interest.

“Monsieur,” continued the old man, “if I were sure that you are really seeking silence and seclusion, I should say take those rooms near mine.” He raised his voice so that Madame Vauthier, who was now passing them, could hear him. “Take those rooms. I am a father, monsieur. I have only a daughter and a grandson to enable me to bear the miseries of life. Now, my daughter needs silence and absolute tranquillity. All those persons who, so far, have looked at the rooms you are now considering, have listened to the reasons and the entreaties of a despairing father. It was indifferent to them whether they lived in one house or another of a quarter so deserted that plenty of lodgings can be had for a low price. But I see in you a fixed determination, and I beg you, monsieur, not to deceive me. Do you really desire a quiet life? If not, I shall be forced to move and go beyond the barrier, and the removal may cost me my daughter’s life.”

If the man could have wept, the tears would have covered his cheeks while he spoke; as it was, they were, to use an expression now become vulgar, “in his

voice." He covered his forehead with his hand, which was nothing but bones and muscle.

"What is your daughter's illness?" asked Godefroid, in a persuasive and sympathetic voice.

"A terrible disease to which physicians give various names, but it has, in truth, no name. My fortune is lost," he added, with one of those despairing gestures made only by the wretched. "The little money that I had, — for in 1830 I was cast from a high position, — in fact, all that I possessed, was soon used up on my daughter's illness; her mother, too, was ruined by it, and finally her husband. To-day the pension I receive from the government barely suffices for the actual necessities of my poor, dear, saintly child. The faculty of tears has left me; I have suffered tortures. Monsieur, I must be granite not to have died. But, no, God has kept alive the father that the child might have a nurse, a providence. Her poor mother died of the strain. Ah! you have come, young man, at a moment when the old tree that never yet has bent feels the axe — the axe of poverty, sharpened by sorrow — at his roots. Yes, here am I, who never complain, talking to you of this illness so as to prevent you from coming to the house; or, if you still persist, to implore you not to trouble our peace. Monsieur, at this moment my daughter barks like a dog, day and night."

"Is she insane?" asked Godefroid.

“Her mind is sound ; she is a saint,” replied the old man. “ You will presently think that I am mad when I tell you all. Monsieur, my only child, my daughter was born of a mother in excellent health. I never in my life loved but one woman, the one I married. I married the daughter of one of the bravest colonels of the Imperial guard, Tarlowski, a Pole, formerly on the staff of the Emperor. The functions that I exercised in my high position demanded the utmost purity of life and morals ; but I have never had room in my heart for many feelings, and I faithfully loved my wife, who deserved such love. I am a father in like manner as I was a husband, and that is telling you all in one word. My daughter never left her mother ; no child has ever lived more chastely, more truly a Christian than my dear daughter. She was born more than pretty, she was born most beautiful ; and her husband, a young man of whose morals I was absolutely sure, — he was the son of a friend of mine, the judge of one of the Royal courts, — did not in any way contribute to my daughter’s illness.”

Godefroid and Monsieur Bernard made an involuntary pause, and looked at each other.

“Marriage, as you know, sometimes changes a young woman greatly,” resumed the old man. “ The first pregnancy passed well and produced a son, my grandson, who now lives with us, the last scion of two

families. The second pregnancy was accompanied by such extraordinary symptoms that the physicians, much astonished, attributed them to the caprice of phenomena which sometimes manifest themselves in this state, and are recorded by physicians in the annals of science. My daughter gave birth to a dead child; in fact, it was twisted and smothered by internal movements. The disease had begun, the pregnancy counted for nothing. Perhaps you are a student of medicine?"

Godefroid made a sign which answered as well for affirmation as for negation.

"After this terrible confinement," resumed Monsieur Bernard, — "so terrible and laborious that it made a violent impression on my son-in-law and began the mortal melancholy of which he died, — my daughter, two or three months later, complained of a general weakness affecting, particularly, her feet, which she declared felt like cottonwool. This debility changed to paralysis, — and what a paralysis! My daughter's feet and legs can be bent or twisted in any way and she does not feel it. The limbs are there, apparently without blood or muscles or bones. This affection, which is not connected with anything known to science, spread to the arms and hands, and we then supposed it to be a disease of the spinal chord. Doctors and remedies only made matters worse until at last my poor daughter

could not be moved without dislocating either the shoulders, the arms, or the knees. I kept an admirable surgeon almost constantly in the house, who, with the doctor, or doctors (for many came out of interest in the case), replaced the dislocated limbs, — sometimes, would you believe it monsieur? three and four times a day! Ah! — This disease has so many forms that I forgot to tell you that during the first period of weakness, before the paralysis began, the strangest signs of catalepsy appeared — you know what catalepsy is. She remained for days with her eyes open, motionless, in whatever position she was when the attack seized her. The worst symptoms of that strange affection were shown, even those of lockjaw. This phase of her illness suggested to me the idea of employing magnetism, and I was about to do so when the paralysis began. My daughter, monsieur, has a miraculous clear-sightedness; her soul has been the theatre of all the wonders of somnambulism, just as her body has been that of all diseases.”

Godefroid began to ask himself if the old man were really sane.

“So that I,” continued Monsieur Bernard paying no attention to the expression in Godefroid’s eyes, “even I, a child of the eighteenth century, fed on Voltaire, Diderot, Helvetius, — I, a son of the Revolution, who scoff at all that antiquity and the middle-ages tell us of

demoniacal possession, — well, monsieur, I affirm that nothing but such possession can explain the condition of my child. As a somnambulist she has never been able to tell us the cause of her sufferings; she has never perceived it, and all the remedies she has proposed when in that state, though carefully carried out, have done her no good. For instance, she wished to be wrapped in the carcass of a freshly killed pig; then she ordered us to run the sharp points of red-hot magnets into her legs; and to put hot sealing-wax on her spine — ”

Godefroid looked at him in amazement.

“ And then ! what endless other troubles, monsieur ! her teeth fell out ; she became deaf, then dumb ; and then, after six months of absolute dumbness, utter deafness, speech and hearing returned to her ! She recovered, just as capriciously as she had lost, the use of her hands. But her feet have continued in the same helpless condition for the last seven years. She has shown marked and well-characterized symptoms of hydrophobia. Not only does the sight of water, the sound of water, the presence of a glass or a cup fling her at times into a state of fury, but she barks like a dog, that melancholy bark, or rather howl, a dog utters when he hears an organ. Several times we have thought her dying, and the priests have administered the last sacraments ; but she has always returned to life to suffer

with her full reason and the most absolute clearness of mind ; for her faculties of heart and soul are still untouched. Though she has lived, monsieur, she has caused the deaths of her mother and her husband, who have not been able to endure the suffering of such scenes. Alas ! monsieur, those distressing scenes are becoming worse. All the natural functions are perverted ; the Faculty alone can explain the strange aberration of the organs. She was in this state when I brought her from the provinces to Paris in 1829, because the two or three distinguished doctors to whom I wrote, Desplein, Bianchon, and Haudry, thought from my letters that I was telling them fables. Magnetism was then energetically denied by all the schools of medicine, and without saying that they doubted either my word or that of the provincial doctors, they said we could not have observed thoroughly, or else we had been misled by the exaggeration which patients are apt to indulge in. But they were forced to change their minds when they saw my daughter ; and it is to the phenomena they then observed that the great researches made in these latter days into nervous diseases are owing ; for I must tell you that they class my daughter's singular state as a form of neurosis. At the last consultation of these gentlemen they decided to stop all medicines, to let nature alone and study it. Since then I have had but one doctor, and he is the doctor who attends

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the poor of this quarter. We do nothing for her now but alleviate pain, for we know not the cause of it."

Here the old man stopped as if overcome with this harrowing confidence.

"For the last five years," he continued, "my daughter alternates between revivals and relapses, but no new phenomena have appeared. She suffers more or less from the varied nervous attacks I have briefly described to you, but the paralysis of the legs and the derangement of the natural functions are constant. The poverty into which we fell, and which alas! is only increasing, obliged me to leave the rooms that I took, in 1829, in the faubourg du Roule. My daughter cannot endure the fatigue of moving; I came near losing her when I brought her to Paris, and again when I removed her to this house. Here my worst financial misfortunes have come upon me. After thirty years in the public service I was made to wait four years before my pension was granted. I have only received it during the last six months and even then the new government has sternly cut it down to the minimum."

Godefroid made a gesture of surprise which seemed to ask for a more complete confidence. The old man so understood it, for he answered immediately, casting a reproachful glance to heaven:—

"I am one of the thousand victims of political reaction. I conceal my name because it is the mark for

many a revenge. If the lessons of experience were not always wasted from one generation to another I should warn you, young man, never to adopt the sternness of any policy. Not that I regret having done my duty; my conscience is perfectly easy on that score; but the powers of to-day have not that solidarity which formerly bound all governments together as governments, no matter how different they might be; if to-day they reward zealous agents it is because they are afraid of them. The instrument they have used, no matter how faithful it has been, is, sooner or later, cast aside. You see in me one of the firmest supporters of the government of the elder branch of the Bourbons, as I was later of the Imperial power; yet here I am in penury! Since I am too proud to beg, they have never dreamed that I suffer untold misery. Five days ago, monsieur, the doctor of this quarter who takes care of my daughter, or rather I should say, observes her, told me that he was unable to cure a disease the forms of which varied perpetually. He says that neurotic patients are the despair of science, for the causes of their conditions are only to be found in some as yet unexplored system. He advised me to have recourse to a physician who has been called a quack; but he carefully pointed out that this man was a stranger, a Polish Jew, a refugee, and that the Parisian doctors were extremely jealous of certain wonderful cures he had

made, and also of the opinion expressed by many that he is very learned and extremely able. Only, Dr. Berton says, he is very exacting and overbearing. He selects his patients, and will not allow an instant of his time to be wasted; and he is — a communist! His name is Halpersohn. My grandson has been twice to find him, but he is always too busy to attend to him; he has not been to see us; I fully understand why.”

“Why?” asked Godefroid.

“Because my grandson, who is sixteen years old, is even more shabbily dressed than I am. Would you believe it, monsieur? I *dare* not go to that doctor; my clothes are so out of keeping with a man of my age and dignity. If he saw the father shabby as I am, and the boy even worse, he might not give my daughter the needful attention; he would treat us as doctors treat the poor. And think, my dear monsieur, that I love my daughter for all the suffering she has caused me, just as I used to love her for the joys I had in her. She has become angelic. Alas! she is nothing now but a soul, a soul which beams upon her son and me; the body no longer exists; she has conquered suffering. Think what a spectacle for a father! The whole world, to my daughter, is within the walls of her room. I keep it filled with flowers, for she loves them. She reads a great deal; and when she has the use of her hands she works like a fairy. She has no conception of the

horrible poverty to which we are reduced. This makes our household way of life so strange, so eccentric, that we cannot admit visitors. Do you now understand me, monsieur? Can you not see how impossible a neighbor is? I should have to ask so much forbearance from him that the obligation would be too heavy. Besides, I have no time for friends; I educate my grandson, and I have so much other work to do that I only sleep three, or at most four hours at night."

"Monsieur," said Godefroid, who had listened patiently, observing the old man with sorrowful attention, "I will be your neighbor, and I will help you."

A scornful gesture, even an impatient one, escaped the old man, for he was one who believed in nothing good in human nature.

"I will help you," pursued Godefroid, taking his hand, "but in my own way. Listen to me. What do you mean to make of your grandson?"

"He is soon to enter the Law school. I am bringing him up to the bar."

"Then he will cost you six hundred francs a year."

The old man made no reply.

"I myself," continued Godefroid after a pause, "have nothing, but I may be able to do much. I will obtain the Polish doctor for you. And if your daughter

is curable she shall be cured. We will find some way of paying Halpersohn."

"Oh! if my daughter be cured I will make a sacrifice I can make but once," cried the old man. "I will sell the pear I have kept for a thirsty day."

"You shall keep the pear—"

"Oh youth! youth!" exclaimed Monsieur Bernard, shaking his head. "Adieu, monsieur; or rather, au revoir. This is the hour for the Library, and as my books are all sold I am obliged to go there every day to do my work. I shall bear in mind the kindness you express, but I must wait and see whether you will grant us the consideration I must ask from my neighbor. That is all I expect of you."

"Yes, monsieur, let me be your neighbor; for, I assure you, Barbet is not a man to allow the rooms to be long unrented, and you might have far worse neighbors than I. I do not ask you to believe in me, only to let me be useful to you."

"What object have you?" said the old man, preparing to go down the steps from the cloister of the Chartreux which lead from the great alley of the Luxembourg to the rue d'Enfer.

"Did you never, in your public functions, oblige any one?"

The old man looked at Godefroid with frowning brows; his eyes were full of memories, like a man who

turns the leaves of his book of life, seeking for the action to which he owed this gratitude ; then he turned away coldly, with a bow, full of doubt.

“ Well, for a first investigation I did not frighten him much,” thought Godefroid.

XIII.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS.

Godefroid now went to the rue d'Enfer, the address given him by Monsieur Alain, and there found Dr. Berton, a cold, grave man, who astonished him much by confirming all the details given by Monsieur Bernard about his daughter's illness. From him Godefroid obtained the address of Halpersohn.

This Polish doctor, since so celebrated, then lived in Chaillot, rue Marbeuf, in an isolated house where he occupied the first floor. General Romanus Zarnowski lived on the second floor, and the servants of the two refugees inhabited the garret of this little house, which had but two stories. Godefroid did not find Halpersohn, and was told that he had gone into the provinces, sent for by a rich patient; he was almost glad not to meet him, for in his hurry he had forgotten to supply himself with money; and he now went back to the hôtel de la Chanterie to get some.

These various trips and the time consumed in dining at a restaurant in the rue de l'Odéon brought Godefroid to the hour when he had said he would return and take

possession of his lodging on the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse. Nothing could be more forlorn than the manner in which Madame Vauthier had furnished the two rooms. It seemed as though the woman let rooms with the express purpose that no one should stay in them. Evidently the bed, chairs, tables, bureau, secretary, curtains, came from forced sales at auction, articles massed together in lots as having no separate intrinsic value.

Madame Vauthier, with her hands on her hips, stood waiting for thanks; she took Godefroid's smile for one of surprise.

"There! I picked out for you the very best we have, my dear Monsieur Godefroid," she said with a triumphant air. "See those pretty silk curtains, and the mahogany bedstead which has n't got a worm-hole in it! It formerly belonged to the Prince of Wissembourg. When he left his house, rue Louis-le-Grand, in 1809, I was the kitchen-girl. From there, I went to live as cook with the present owner of this house."

Godefroid stopped the flux of confidences by paying a month's rent in advance; and he also gave, in advance, the six francs he was to pay Madame Vauthier for the care of his rooms. At that moment he heard barking, and if he had not been duly warned by Monsieur Bernard, he would certainly have supposed that his neighbor kept a dog.

“Does that dog bark at night?” he asked.

“Oh! don’t be uneasy, monsieur; you’ll only have one week to stand those persons. Monsieur Bernard can’t pay his rent and we are going to put him out. They are queer people, I tell you! I have never seen their dog. That animal is sometimes months, yes, six months at a time without making a sound; you might think they had n’t a dog. The beast never leaves the lady’s room. There’s a sick lady in there, and very sick, too; she’s never been out of her room since she came. Old Monsieur Bernard works hard, and the son, too; the lad is a day-scholar at the school of Louis-le-Grand, where he is nearly through his philosophy course, and only sixteen, too; that’s something to boast of! but the little scamp has to work like one possessed. Presently you’ll hear them bring out the plants they keep in the lady’s room and carry in fresh ones. They themselves, the grandfather and the boy, only eat bread, though they buy flowers and all sorts of dainties for the lady. She must be very ill, not to leave her room once since entering it; and if one’s to believe Monsieur Berton, the doctor, she’ll never come out except feet foremost.”

“What does this Monsieur Bernard do?”

“It seems he’s a learned man; he writes and goes about to libraries. Monsieur lends him money on his compositions.”

“Monsieur? who is he?”

“The proprietor of the house, Monsieur Barbet, the old bookseller. He is a Norman who used to sell green stuff in the streets, and afterwards set up a bookstall, in 1818, on the quay. Then he got a little shop, and now he is very rich. He is a kind of a Jew, with a score of trades; he was even a partner with the Italian who built this barrack to lodge silk-worms.”

“So this house is a refuge for unfortunate authors?” said Godefroid.

“Is monsieur unluckily one himself?” asked the widow Vauthier.

“I am only just starting,” replied Godefroid.

“Oh! my dear monsieur, take my advice and don’t go on; journalist? well, — I won’t say anything against that.”

Godefroid could not help laughing as he bade good-night to the portress, who thus, all unconsciously, represented the bourgeoisie. As he went to bed in the horrible room, floored with bricks that were not even colored, and hung with a paper at seven sous a roll, Godefroid not only regretted his little rooms in the rue Chanoinesse, but also the society of Madame de la Chanterie. He felt a void in his soul. He had already acquired habits of mind; and could not remember to have so keenly regretted anything in all his former life as this break in his new existence. These thoughts,

as they pressed upon him, had a great effect upon his soul; he felt that no life could compare in value with the one he sought to embrace, and his resolution to emulate the good old Alain became unshakable. Without having any vocation for the work, he had the will to do it.

The next day Godefroid, already habituated by his new life to rising early, saw from his window a young man about seventeen years of age, dressed in a blouse, who was coming back, no doubt from the public fountain, bringing a crock full of water in each hand. The face of this lad, who was not aware that he was seen, revealed his feelings, and never had Godefroid observed one so artless and so melancholy. The graces of youth were all repressed by poverty, by study, by great physical fatigue. Monsieur Bernard's grandson was remarkable for a complexion of extreme whiteness, which the contrast with his dark hair seemed to make still whiter. He made three trips; when he returned from the last he saw some men unloading a cord of wood which Godefroid had ordered the night before, for the long-delayed winter of 1838 was beginning to be felt; snow had fallen slightly during the night.

Népomucène, who had begun his day by going for the wood (on which Madame Vauthier levied a handsome tribute), spoke to the young lad while waiting until the woodman had sawed enough for him to carry

upstairs. It was easy to see that the sudden cold was causing anxiety to Monsieur Bernard's grandson, and that the sight of the wood, as well as that of the threatening sky, warned him that they ought to be making their own provision for wintry weather. Suddenly, however, as if reproaching himself for lost time, he seized his crocks and hastily entered the house. It was, in fact, half-past seven o'clock, the hour was just ringing from the belfry of the convent of the Visitation, and he was due at the college of Louis-le-Grand by half-past eight.

As the young lad entered the house, Godefroid went to his door to admit Madame Vauthier who brought her new lodger the wherewithal to make a fire, and he thus became the witness of a scene which took place on the landing.

A neighboring gardener, who had rung several times at Monsieur Bernard's door without making any one hear (for the bell was wrapped in paper), had a rather rough dispute with the young lad who now came up with the water, demanding to be paid for the flowers he had supplied. As the man raised his voice angrily Monsieur Bernard appeared. "Auguste," he said to his grandson, "dress yourself, it is time for school."

He himself took the two crocks of water, carried them into the first of his rooms, in which were many pots of flowers, and returned to speak to the gardener,

carefully closing the door behind him. Godefroid's door was open, for Népomucène had begun his trips, and was stacking the wood in the front room. The gardener was silent in presence of Monsieur Bernard, whose tall figure, robed in a violet silk dressing-gown, buttoned to the throat, gave him an imposing air.

"You might ask for what is owing to you without such noise," said Monsieur Bernard.

"Be fair, my dear monsieur," said the gardener. "You agreed to pay me every week, and it is now three months, ten weeks, since I have had a penny; you owe me a hundred and twenty francs. We let out our plants to rich people who pay us when we ask for the money; but this is the fifth time I have come to you for it. I have my rent to pay and the wages of my men; I am not a bit richer than you. My wife, who supplied you with eggs and milk, will not come here any more; you owe her thirty francs. She does not like to dun you, for she is kind-hearted, that she is! If I listened to her, I could n't do business at all. And so I, who am not so soft — you understand?"

Just then Auguste came out dressed in a shabby little green coat with cloth trousers of the same color, a black cravat, and worn-out boots. These clothes, though carefully brushed, showed the lowest degree of poverty; they were all too short and too narrow, so that the lad seemed likely to crack them at every

motion. The seams were white, the edges curled, the buttonholes torn in spite of many mendings; the whole presenting to the most unobservant eyes the heart-breaking stigmas of honest penury. This livery contrasted sadly with the youth of the lad, who now disappeared munching a crust of stale bread with his strong and handsome teeth. He breakfasted thus on his way to the rue Saint-Jacques, carrying his books and papers under his arm, and wearing a little cap much too small for his head, from which stuck out a mass of magnificent black hair.

In passing before his grandfather the lad had given him rapidly a look of deep distress; for he knew him to be in an almost hopeless difficulty, the consequences of which might be terrible. To leave room for the boy to pass, the gardener had stepped back to the sill of Godefroid's door, and as at that moment Népomucène arrived with a quantity of wood, the creditor was forced to retreat into the room.

"Monsieur Bernard!" cried the widow Vauthier, "do you think Monsieur Godefroid hired his rooms to have you hold your meetings in them?"

"Excuse me, madame," said the gardener, "but there was no room on the landing."

"I did n't say that for you, Monsieur Cartier," said the widow.

"Remain where you are!" cried Godefroid, address-

ing the gardener; "and you, my dear neighbor," he added, looking at Monsieur Bernard, who seemed insensible to the cruel insult, "if it is convenient to you to have an explanation with your gardener in my room, come in."

The old man, half stupefied with his troubles, cast a look of gratitude on Godefroid.

"As for you, my dear Madame Vauthier," continued Godefroid, "don't be so rough with monsieur, who is in the first place an old man, and one to whom you owe the obligation of my lodging here."

"Oh, pooh!" said the widow.

"Besides, if poor people do not help each other, who will help them? Leave us, Madame Vauthier; I'll blow the fire myself. Have the rest of my wood put in your cellar; I am sure you will take good care of it."

Madame Vauthier disappeared, for Godefroid in telling her to take care of his wood had given an opportunity to her greed.

"Come in this way," said Godefroid, offering chairs to both debtor and creditor.

The old man conversed standing, but the gardener sat down.

"My good Monsieur Cartier," went on Godefroid, "rich people do not pay as regularly as you say they do, and you ought not to dun a worthy man for a few

louis. Monsieur draws his pension every six months, and he could not make you an assignment of it for such a paltry sum. I am willing to advance the money, if you absolutely insist on having it."

"Monsieur Bernard drew his pension two weeks ago, and has not paid me. I am sorry to trouble him, of course."

"Have you furnished him with plants all along?"

"Yes, monsieur, for six years, and he has always paid me."

Monsieur Bernard, who was listening to some sound in his own rooms and paying no attention to what was being said, now heard a cry through the partitions and hurriedly went away without a word.

"Come, come, my good man," said Godefroid, taking advantage of the old man's absence, "bring some nice flowers, your best flowers, this very morning, and tell your wife to send the eggs and milk as usual; I will pay you this evening."

Cartier looked oddly at Godefroid.

"Then you must know more than Madame Vauthier does; she sent me word to hurry if I hoped to be paid," he said. "Neither she nor I can make out why folks who eat nothing but bread and the odds and ends of vegetables, bits of carrots, turnips, and such things, which they get at the back-doors of restaurants, — yes, monsieur, I assure you I came one day on the little

fellow filling an old handbag, — well, I want to know why such persons spend nearly forty francs a month on flowers. They say the old man's pension is only three thousand francs."

"At any rate," said Godefroid, "it is not your business to complain if they ruin themselves in flowers."

"That's true, monsieur, — provided they pay me."

"Bring your bill to me."

"Very good, monsieur," said the gardener, with a tinge of respect. "Monsieur no doubt wants to see the mysterious lady."

"My good friend," said Godefroid, stiffly, "you forget yourself. Go home now and bring fresh plants for those you are to take away. If you can also supply me with good cream and fresh eggs I will take them, and I will go this morning and take a look at your establishment."

"It is one of the finest in Paris, monsieur. I exhibit at the Luxembourg. My garden, which covers three acres, is on the boulevard, behind the garden of La Grande-Chaumière."

"Very good, Monsieur Cartier. You are, I see, much richer than I. Have some consideration for us, therefore. Who knows how soon we may have mutual need of each other?"

The gardener went away, much puzzled as to who and what Godefroid might be.

“And yet I was once just like that,” thought Godefroid, blowing his fire. “What a fine specimen of the bourgeois of to-day! — gossiping, inquisitive, crazy for equality, jealous of his customers, furious at not knowing why a poor sick woman stays in her room without being seen; concealing his wealth, and yet vain enough to betray it when he thinks it will put him above his neighbor. That man ought to be the lieutenant of his company. I dare say he is. With what ease he plays the scene of Monsieur Dimanche! A little more and I should have made a friend of Monsieur Cartier.”

The old man broke into this soliloquy, which proves how Godefroid’s ideas had changed in four months.

“Excuse me, neighbor,” said Monsieur Bernard, in a troubled voice; “I see you have sent that gardener away satisfied, for he bowed civilly to me on the landing. It seems, young man, as if Providence had sent you to me at the very moment I was about to succumb. Alas! the hard talk of that man must have shown you many things! It is true that I received the half-yearly payment of my pension two weeks ago; but I had more pressing debts than his, and I was forced to put aside my rent for fear of being turned out of the house. I have told you the state my daughter is in, and you have probably heard her.”

He looked uneasily at Godefroid, who made him an affirmative sign.

“Well, then, you know it would be her death warrant, for I should then be compelled to put her in a hospital. My grandson and I were fearing that end this morning; but we do not dread Cartier so much as we do the cold.”

“My dear Monsieur Bernard,” said Godefroid, “I have plenty of wood; take all you want.”

“Ah!” said the old man, “but how can I ever return such services?”

“By accepting them without difficulty,” said Godefroid, quickly, “and by giving me your confidence.”

“But what are my claims to so much generosity?” asked Monsieur Bernard, becoming once more distrustful. “Ah! my pride and that of my grandson are lowered indeed!” he cried bitterly. “We are compelled to offer explanations to the few creditors — only two or three — whom we cannot pay. The utterly unfortunate have no creditors; to have them one must needs present an exterior of some show, and that we have now lost. But I have not yet abdicated my common-sense, — my reason,” he added, as if he were talking to himself.

“Monsieur,” replied Godefroid, gravely, “the history you gave me yesterday would touch even a usurer.”

“No, no! for Barbet, that publisher, the proprietor of this house, is speculating on my poverty, and has

sent the Vauthier woman, his former cook, to spy upon it."

"How can he speculate upon you?" asked Godefroid.

"I will tell you later," replied the old man. "My daughter is cold, and since you offer it, I am reduced to accept alms, were it even from my worst enemy."

"I will carry in some wood," said Godefroid, gathering up ten or a dozen sticks, and taking them into Monsieur Bernard's first room. The old man took as many himself; and when he saw the little provision safely deposited, he could not restrain the silly, and even idiotic smile with which those who are saved from a mortal danger, which has seemed to them inevitable, express their joy; for terror still lingers in their joy.

"Accept things from me, my dear Monsieur Bernard, without reluctance; and when your daughter is safe, and you are once more at ease, we will settle all. Meantime, let me act for you. I have been to see that Polish doctor; unfortunately he is absent; he will not be back for two days."

At this moment a voice which seemed to Godefroid to have, and really had, a fresh, melodious ring, cried out, "Papa, papa!" on two expressive notes.

While speaking to the old man, Godefroid had noticed that the jambs of a door leading to another room were painted in a delicate manner, altogether

different from that of the rest of the lodging. His curiosity, already so keenly excited, was now roused to the highest pitch. He was conscious that his mission of benevolence was becoming nothing more than a pretext; what he really wanted was to see that sick woman. He refused to believe for an instant that a creature endowed with such a voice could be an object of repulsion.

“You do, indeed, take too much trouble, papa!” said the voice. “Why not have more servants?—and at your age, too! Good God!”

“But you know, my dear Vanda, that the boy and I cannot bear that any one should wait upon you but ourselves!”

Those sentences, which Godefroid heard through the door, or rather divined, for a heavy portière on the inside smothered the sounds, gave him an inkling of the truth. The sick woman, surrounded by luxury, was evidently kept in ignorance of the real situation of her father and son. The violet silk dressing-gown of Monsieur Bernard, the flowers, his remarks to Cartier, had already roused some suspicion of this in Godefroid’s mind. The young man stood still where he was, bewildered by this prodigy of paternal love. The contrast, such as he imagined it, between the invalid’s room and the rest of that squalid place,—yes, it was bewildering!

XIV.

HOW THE POOR AND HELPLESS ARE PREYED UPON.

THROUGH the door of a third chamber, which the old man had left open, Godefroid beheld two cots of painted wood, like those of the cheapest boarding-schools, each with a straw bed and a thin mattress, on which there was but one blanket. A small iron stove like those that porters cook by, near which lay a few squares of peat, would alone have shown the poverty of the household without the help of other details.

Advancing a step or two, Godefroid saw utensils such as the poorest persons use, — earthenware jugs, and pans in which potatoes floated in dirty water. Two tables of blackened wood, covered with books and papers, stood before the windows that looked out upon the rue Notre-Dame des Champs, and indicated the nocturnal occupations of father and son. On each of the tables was a flat iron candlestick, such as are used by the very poor, and in them Godefroid noticed tallow-candles of the kind that are sold at eight to the pound.

On a third table glittered two forks and spoons and another little spoon of silver-gilt, together with plates, bowls, and cups of Sèvres china, and a silver-gilt knife

and fork in an open case, all evidently for the service of the sick woman.

The stove was lighted ; the water in the copper was steaming slightly. A painted wooden closet or wardrobe contained, no doubt, the linen and clothing of Monsieur Bernard's daughter. On the old man's bed Godefroid noticed that the habiliments he had worn the night before lay spread as a covering. The floor, evidently seldom swept, looked like that of a boy's class-room. A six-pound loaf of bread, from which some slices had been cut, was on a shelf above the table. Here was poverty in its last stages, poverty resolutely accepted with stern endurance, making shift with the lowest and poorest means. A strong and sickening odor came from this room, which was rarely cleaned.

The antechamber, in which Godefroid stood, was at any rate decent, and he suspected that it served to conceal the horrors of the room in which the grandfather and the grandson lived. This antechamber, hung with a checked paper of Scotch pattern, held four walnut chairs, a small table, a colored engraving of the Emperor after Horace Vernet, also portraits of Louis XVIII., Charles X., and Prince Poniatowski, no doubt the friend of Monsieur Bernard's father-in-law. The window was draped with white calico curtains edged with red bands and fringe.

Godefroid watched for Népomucène, and when the latter made his next trip with wood signed to him to stack it very gently in Monsieur Bernard's antechamber; then (with a perception which proved some progress in our initiate) he closed the door of the inner lair that Madame Vauthier's slave might not see the old man's squalor.

The antechamber was just then encumbered with three plant-stands filled with plants; two were oblong, one round, all three of a species of ebony and of great elegance; even Népomucène took notice of them and said as he deposited the wood:—

“Hey! ain't they pretty? They must have cost a good bit!”

“Jean! don't make so much noise!” called Monsieur Bernard from his daughter's room.

“Did you hear that?” whispered Népomucène to Godefroid. “He's cracked, for sure, that old fellow.”

“You don't know what you may be at his age.”

“Yes, I do know,” responded Népomucène, “I shall be in the sugar-bowl.”

“The sugar-bowl?”

“Yes, they'll have made my bones into charcoal by that time; I often see the carts of the refineries coming to Montsouris for charcoal; they tell me they make sugar of it.” And he departed after another load of wood, satisfied with this philosophical reflection.

Godefroid discreetly withdrew to his own rooms, closing Monsieur Bernard's door behind him. Madame Vauthier, who during this time had been preparing her new lodger's breakfast, now came up to serve it, attended by Félicité. Godefroid, lost in reflection, stared into his fire. He was absorbed in meditation on this great misery which contained so many different miseries, and yet within which he could see the ineffable joys of the many triumphs of paternal and filial love; they were gems shining in the blackness of the pit.

"What romances, even those that are most famous, can equal such realities?" he thought. "What a life it will be to relieve the burden of such existences, to seek out causes and effects and remedy them, calming sorrows, helping good; to incarnate one's own being in misery; to familiarize one's self with homes like that; to act out constantly in life those dramas which move us so in fiction! I never imagined that good could be more interesting, more piquant than vice."

"Is monsieur satisfied with his breakfast?" asked Madame Vauthier, who now, with Félicité's assistance, brought the table close to Godefroid.

Godefroid then saw a cup of excellent *café ou lait* with a smoking omelet, fresh butter, and little red radishes.

"Where the devil did you get those radishes?" he asked.

“They were given me by Monsieur Cartier,” answered Madame Vauthier; “and I make a present of them to monsieur.”

“And what are you going to ask me for such a breakfast daily?”

“Well now, monsieur, be fair, — I could n’t do it for less than thirty sous.”

“Very good, thirty sous then;” said Godefroid; “but how is it that they ask me only forty-five francs a month for dinner, close by here at Machillot’s? That is the same price you ask me for breakfast.”

“But what a difference, monsieur, between preparing a dinner for fifteen or twenty persons and going out to get you just what you want for breakfast! See here! there’s a roll, eggs, butter, the cost of lighting a fire, sugar, milk, coffee! — just think! they ask you sixteen sous for a cup of coffee alone on the place de l’Odéon, and then you have to give a sou or two to the waiter. Here you have no trouble; you can breakfast in slippers.”

“Very well, very well,” said Godefroid.

“Without Madame Cartier who supplies me with milk and eggs and herbs I could n’t manage it. You ought to go and see their establishment, monsieur. Ha! its fine! They employ five journeymen gardeners, and Népomucène goes there in summer to draw water for them; they hire him of me as a waterer. They

make lots of money out of melons and strawberries. It seems monsieur takes quite an interest in Monsieur Bernard," continued the widow in dulcet tones; "or he wouldn't be responsible for his debts. Perhaps he does n't know all that family owes. There's the lady who keeps the circulating library on the place Saint-Michel; she is always coming here after thirty francs they owe her, — and she needs it, God knows! That sick woman in there, she reads, reads, reads! Two sous a volume makes thirty francs in three months."

"That means a hundred volumes a month," said Godefroid.

"Ah! there's the old man going now to fetch a roll and cream for his daughter's tea, — yes, tea! she lives on tea, that lady. She drinks it twice a day. And twice a week she has to have sweet things. Oh! she's dainty! The old man buys cakes and pâtés from the pastry cook in the rue de Buci. He don't care what he spends, if it's for her. He calls her his daughter! It ain't often that men of his age do for a daughter what he does for her! He just kills himself, he and Auguste too, for that woman. Monsieur is just like me; I'd give anything to see her. Monsieur Berton says she's a monster, — something like those they show for money. That's the reason they've come to live here, in this lonely quarter. Well, so monsieur thinks of dining at Madame Machillot's, does he?"

“Yes, I think of making an arrangement there.”

“Monsieur, it is n’t that I want to interfere, but I must say, comparing food with food, you’d do much better to dine in the rue de Tournon; you need n’t engage by the month, and you’ll find a better table.”

“Whereabouts in the rue de Tournon?”

“At the successors to Madame Giraud. That’s where the gentlemen upstairs go; they are satisfied, and more than satisfied.”

“Well, I’ll take your advice and dine there to-day.”

“My dear monsieur,” said the woman, emboldened by the good-nature which Godefroid intentionally assumed “tell me seriously, you are not going to be such a muff as to pay Monsieur Bernard’s debts? It would really trouble me if you did; for just reflect, my kind monsieur Godefroid, he’s nearly seventy, and after him, what then? not a penny of pension! How’ll you get paid? Young men are so imprudent! Do you know that he owes three thousand francs?”

“To whom?” inquired Godefroid.

“Oh! to whom? that’s not my affair,” said the widow, mysteriously; “it is enough that he does owe them. Between ourselves I’ll tell you this: somebody will soon be down on him for that money, and he can’t get a penny of credit now in the quarter just on that account.”

“Three thousand francs!” repeated Godefroid; “oh,

you need n't be afraid I'll lend him that. If I had three thousand francs to dispose of I should n't be your lodger. But I can't bear to see others suffer, and just for a hundred or so of francs I sha'n't let my neighbor, a man with white hair too, lack for bread or wood; why, one often loses as much as that at cards. But three thousand francs! good heavens! what are you thinking of?"

Madame Vauthier, deceived by Godefroid's apparent frankness, let a smile of satisfaction appear on her specious face, which confirmed all her lodger's suspicions. Godefroid was convinced that the old woman was an accomplice in some plot that was brewing against the unfortunate old man.

"It is strange, monsieur," she went on, "what fancies one takes into one's head! You'll think me very curious, but yesterday, when I saw you talking with Monsieur Bernard I said to myself that you were the clerk of some publisher; for this, you know, is a publishers' quarter. I once lodged the foreman of a printing-house in the rue de Vaugirard, and his name was the same as yours —"

"What does my business signify to you?" interrupted Godefroid.

"Oh, pooh! you can tell me, or you need n't tell me; I shall know it all the same," retorted Vauthier. "There's Monsieur Bernard, for instance,

for eighteen months he concealed everything from me, but on the nineteenth I discovered that he been a magistrate, a judge somewhere or other, I forget where, and was writing a book on law matters. What did he gain by concealing it, I ask you. If he had told me I'd have said nothing about it — so there!”

“I am not yet a publisher's clerk, but I expect to be,” said Godefroid.

“I thought so!” exclaimed Madame Vauthier, turning round from the bed she had been making as a pretext for staying in the room. “You have come here to cut the ground from under the feet of — Good! *a man warned is a man armed.*”

“Stop!” cried Godefroid, placing himself between the Vauthier and the door. “Look here, what interest have you in the matter?”

“Gracious!” said the old woman, eyeing Godefroid cautiously, “you're a bold one, anyhow.”

She went to the door of the outer room and bolted it; then she came back and sat down on a chair beside the fire.

“On my word of honor, and as sure as my name is Vauthier, I took you for a student until I saw you giving your word to that old Bernard. Ha! you're a sly one; and what a play-actor! I was so certain you were a ninny! Look here, will you guarantee me a thousand francs? As sure as the sun shines, my old

Barbet and Monsieur Metivier have promised me five hundred to keep my eyes open for them."

"They! five hundred francs! nonsense!" cried Godefroid. "I know their ways; two hundred is the very most, my good woman, and even that is only promised; you can't assign it. But I will say this: if you will put me in the way to do the business they want to do with Monsieur Bernard I will pay you four hundred francs. Now, then, how does the matter stand?"

"They have advanced fifteen hundred francs upon the work," said Madame Vauthier, making no further effort at deception, "and the old man has signed an acknowledgment for three thousand. They would n't do it under a hundred per cent. He thought he could easily pay them out of his book, but they have arranged to get the better of him there. It was they who sent Cartier here, and the other creditors."

Here Godefroid gave the old woman a glance of ironical intelligence, which showed her that he saw through the rôle she was playing in the interest of her proprietor. Her words were, in fact, a double illumination to Godefroid; the curious scene between himself and the gardener was now explained.

"Well," she resumed, "they have got him now. Where is he to find three thousand francs? They intend to offer him five hundred the day he puts the

first volume of his book into their hands, and five hundred for each succeeding volume. The affair is n't in their names; they have put it into the hands of a publisher whom Barbet set up on the quai des Augustins."

"What, that little fellow?"

"Yes, that little Morand, who was formerly Barbet's clerk. It seems they expect a good bit of money out of the affair."

"There's a good bit to spend," said Godefroid, with a significant grimace.

Just then a gentle rap was heard at the door of the outer room. Godefroid, glad of the interruption, having got all he wanted to know out of Madame Vauthier, went to open it.

"What is said, is said, Madame Vauthier," he remarked as he did so. The visitor was Monsieur Bernard.

"Ah! Monsieur Bernard," cried the widow when she saw him, "I've got a letter downstairs for you."

The old man followed her down a few steps. When they were out of hearing from Godefroid's room she stopped.

"No," she said, "I have n't any letter; I only wanted to tell you to beware of that young man; he belongs to a publishing house."

"That explains everything," thought the old man.

He went back to his neighbor with a very different expression of countenance.

The look of calm coldness with which Monsieur Bernard now entered the room contrasted so strongly with the frank and cordial air he had worn not an instant earlier that Godefroid was forcibly struck by it.

"Pardon me, monsieur," said the old man, stiffly, "but you have shown me many favors, and a benefactor creates certain rights in those he benefits."

Godefroid bowed.

"I, who for the last five years have endured a passion like that of our Lord, I, who for thirty-six years represented social welfare, government, public vengeance, have, as you may well believe, no illusions — no, I have nothing left but anguish. Well, monsieur, I was about to say that your little act in closing the door of my wretched lair, that simple little thing, was to me the glass of water Bossuet tells of. Yes, I did find in my heart, that exhausted heart which cannot weep, just as my withered body cannot sweat, I did find a last drop of the elixir which makes us fancy in our youth that all human things are noble, and I came to offer you my hand; I came to bring you that celestial flower of belief in good —"

"Monsieur Bernard," said Godefroid, remembering the kind old Alain's lessons. "I have done nothing to obtain your gratitude. You are quite mistaken."

“Ah, that is frankness indeed!” said the former magistrate. “Well, it pleases me. I was about to reproach you; pardon me, I now esteem you. So you are a publisher, and you have come here to get my work away from Barbet, Metivier and Morand? All is now explained. You are making me advances in money just as they did, only you do it with some grace.”

“Did Madame Vauthier just tell you that I was employed by a publisher?” asked Godefroid.

“Yes.”

“Well then, Monsieur Bernard, before I can say how much I can *give* over what those other gentlemen *offer*, I must know the terms on which you stand with them.”

“That is fair,” said Monsieur Bernard, who seemed rather pleased to find himself the object of a competition by which he might profit. “Do you know what my work is?”

“No; I only know it is a good enterprise from a business point of view.”

“It is only half-past nine, my daughter has breakfasted, and Cartier will not bring the flowers for an hour or more; we have time to talk, Monsieur — Monsieur who?”

“Godefroid.”

“Monsieur Godefroid, the work in question was projected by me in 1825, at the time when the ministry,

being alarmed by the persistent destruction of landed estates, proposed that law of primogeniture which was, you will remember, defeated. I had remarked certain imperfections in our codes and in the fundamental institutions of France. Our codes have often been the subject of important works, but those works were all from the point of view of jurisprudence. No one had even ventured to consider the work of the Revolution, or (if you prefer it) of Napoleon, as a whole ; no one had studied the spirit of those laws, and judged them in their application. That is the main purpose of my work ; it is entitled, provisionally, ‘ The Spirit of the New Laws ; ’ it includes organic laws as well as codes, all codes ; for we have many more than five codes. Consequently, my work is in several volumes ; six in all, the last being a volume of citations, notes, and references. It will take me now about three months to finish it. The proprietor of this house, a former publisher, of whom I made a few inquiries, perceived, I may say, the chance of a speculation. I, in the first instance, thought only of doing a service to my country, and not of my own profit. Well, this Barbet has circumvented me. You will ask me how it was possible for a publisher to get the better of a magistrate, a man who knows the laws. Well, it was in this way : You know my history ; Barbet is a usurer ; he has the keen glance and the shrewd action of that breed of men.

His money was always at my heels to help me over my worst needs. Strange to say, on the days I was most defenceless against despair he happened to appear."

"No, no, my dear Monsieur Bernard," said Godefroid, "he had a spy in Madame Vauthier; she told him when you needed money. But the terms, the conditions? Tell them to me briefly."

"He has lent me from time to time fifteen hundred francs, for which I have signed three notes of a thousand francs each, and those notes are secured by a sort of mortgage on the copyright of my book, so that I cannot sell my book unless I pay off those notes, and the notes are now protested, — he has taken the matter into court and obtained a judgment against me. Such are the complications of poverty! At the lowest valuation, the first edition of my great work, a work representing ten years' toil and thirty-six years' experience, is fully worth ten thousand francs. Well, ten days ago, Morand proposed to give me three thousand francs and my notes cancelled for the entire rights in perpetuity. Now as it is not possible for me to refund the amount of my notes and interest, namely, three thousand two hundred and forty francs, I must, — unless you intend to step between those usurers and me, — I must yield to them. They are not content with my word of honor; they first obtained the notes, then they had them protested, and now I am threatened with arrest for debt. If I could

manage to pay them back, those scoundrels would have doubled their money. If I accept their terms they will make a fortune out of my book and I shall get almost nothing; one of them is a paper-maker, and God knows how they may keep down the costs of publication. They will have my name, and that alone will sell ten thousand copies for them."

"But, monsieur, how could you, a former magistrate! —"

"How could I help it? Not a friend, not a claim that I could make! And yet I saved many heads, if I made some fall! And, then, my daughter, my daughter! whose nurse I am, whose companion I must be; so that I can work but a few hours snatched from sleep. Ah, young man! none but the wretched can judge the wretched! Sometimes I think I used to be too stern to misery."

"Monsieur, I do not ask your name. I cannot provide three thousand francs, especially if I pay Halpersohn and your lesser debts; but I will save you if you will promise me not to part with your book without letting me know. It is impossible for me to arrange a matter as important as this without consulting others. My backers are powerful, and I can promise you success if you, in return, will promise me absolute secrecy, even to your children, and keep your promise."

"The only success I care for is the recovery of my

poor Vanda; for such sufferings as hers extinguish every other feeling in a father's heart. As for fame, what is that to one who sees an open grave before him?"

"I will come and see you this evening; they expect Halpersohn at any time, and I shall go there day after day till I find him."

"Ah, monsieur! if you should be the cause of my daughter's recovery, I would like — yes, I would like to give you my work!"

"Monsieur," said Godefroid, "I am not a publisher."

The old man started with surprise.

"I let that old Vauthier think so in order to discover the traps they were laying for you."

"Then who are you?"

"Godefroid," replied the initiate; "and since you allow me to offer you enough to make the pot boil, you can call me, if you like, Godefroid de Bouillon."

The old man was far too moved to laugh at a joke. He held out his hand to Godefroid, and pressed that which the young man gave him in return.

"You wish to keep your incognito?" he said, looking at Godefroid sadly, with some uneasiness.

"If you will allow it."

"Well, as you will. Come to-night, and you shall see my daughter if her condition permits."

This was evidently a great concession in the eyes of the poor father, and he had the satisfaction of seeing, by the look on Godefroid's face, that it was understood.

An hour later, Cartier returned with a number of beautiful flowering plants, which he placed himself in the jardinières, covering them with fresh moss. Godefroid paid his bill; also that of the circulating library, which was brought soon after. Books and flowers!—these were the daily bread of this poor invalid, this tortured creature, who was satisfied with so little.

As he thought of this family, coiled by misfortunes like that of the Laocoön (sublime image of so many lives), Godefroid, who was now on his way on foot to the rue Marbeuf, was conscious in his heart of more curiosity than benevolence. This sick woman, surrounded by luxury in the midst of such direful poverty, made him forget the horrible details of the strangest of all nervous disorders, which is happily rare, though recorded by a few historians. One of our most gossiping chroniclers, Tallemant des Réaux, cites an instance of it. The mind instinctively pictures a woman as being elegant in the midst of her worst sufferings; and Godefroid let himself dwell on the pleasure of entering that chamber where none but the father, son, and doctor had been admitted for six years. Nevertheless, he ended by blaming himself for his curiosity. He even felt that the sentiment, natural as it

was, would cease as he went on exercising his beneficent ministry, from the mere fact of seeing more distressed homes and many sorrows.

Such agents do reach in time a divine serenity which nothing surprises or confounds; just as in love we come to the divine quietude of that emotion, sure of its strength, sure of its lastingness, through our constant experience of its pains and sweetnesses.

Godefroid was told that Halpersohn had returned during the night, but had been obliged to go out at once to visit patients who were awaiting him. The porter told Godefroid to come the next day before nine o'clock in the morning.

Remembering Monsieur Alain's injunction to parsimony in his personal expenses, Godefroid dined for twenty-five sous in the rue de Tournon, and was rewarded for his abnegation by finding himself in the midst of compositors and pressmen. He heard a discussion on costs of manufacturing, in which he took part, and learned that an edition of one thousand copies of an octavo volume of forty sheets did not cost more than thirty sous a copy, in the best style of printing. He resolved to ascertain the price at which publishers of law books sold their volumes, so as to be prepared for a discussion with the men who held Monsieur Bernard in their clutches if he should have to meet them.

Towards seven in the evening he returned to the

boulevard du Mont-Parnasse by way of the rue de Vaugirard and the rue de l'Ouest, and he saw then how deserted the quarter was, for he met no one. It is true that the cold was rigorous, and the snow fell in great flakes, the wheels of the carriages making no noise upon the pavements.

"Ah, here you are, monsieur!" said Madame Vauthier. "If I had known you were coming home so early I would have made your fire."

"I don't want one," said Godefroid, seeing that the widow followed him. "I shall spend the evening in Monsieur Bernard's apartment."

"Well, well! you must be his cousin, if you are hand and glove like that! Perhaps monsieur will finish now the little conversation we began."

"Ah, yes! — about that four hundred francs. Look here, my good Madame Vauthier, you are trying to see which way the cat jumps, and you'll tumble yourself between two stools. As for me, you have betrayed me, and made me miss the whole affair."

"Now, don't think that, my dear monsieur. To-morrow, while you breakfast —"

"To-morrow I shall not breakfast here. I am going out, like your authors, at cock-crow."

Godefroid's antecedents, his life as a man of the world and a journalist, served him in this, that he felt quite sure, unless he took this tone, that Barbet's spy

would warn the old publisher of danger, and probably lead to active measures under which Monsieur Bernard would before long be arrested ; whereas, if he left the trio of harpies to suppose that their scheme ran no risk of defeat, they would keep quiet.

But Godefroid did not yet know Parisian human nature when embodied in a Vauthier. That woman resolved to have Godefroid's money and Barbet's too. She instantly ran off to her proprietor, while Godefroid changed his clothes in order to present himself properly before the daughter of Monsieur Bernard.

XV.

AN EVENING WITH VANDA.

EIGHT o'clock was striking from the convent of the Visitation, the clock of the quarter, when the inquisitive Godefroid tapped gently at his neighbor's door. Auguste opened it. As it happened to be a Saturday, the young lad had his evening to himself. Godefroid beheld him in a little sack-coat of black velvet, a blue silk cravat, and black trousers. But his surprise at the youth's appearance, so different from that of his outside life, ceased as soon as he had entered the invalid's chamber. He then understood the reason why both father and son were well dressed.

For a moment the contrast between the squalor of the other rooms, as he had seen them that morning, and the luxury of this chamber, was so great that Godefroid was dazzled, though habituated for years to the luxury and elegance procured by wealth.

The walls of the room were hung with yellow silk, relieved by twisted fringes of a bright green, giving a gay and cheerful aspect to the chamber, the cold tiled floor of which was hidden by a moquette carpet with

a white ground strewn with flowers. The windows, draped by handsome curtains lined with white silk, were like conservatories, so full were they of plants in flower. The blinds were lowered, which prevented this luxury, so rare in that quarter of the town, from being seen from the street. The woodwork was painted in white enamel, touched up, here and there, by a few gold lines.

At the door was a heavy portière, embroidered by hand with fantastic foliage on a yellow ground, so thick that all sounds from without were stifled. This magnificent curtain was made by the sick woman herself, who could work, when she had the use of her hands, like a fairy.

At the farther end of the room, and opposite to the door, was the fireplace, with a green velvet mantelshelf, on which a few extremely elegant ornaments, the last relics of the opulence of two families, were arranged. These consisted of a curious clock, in the shape of an elephant supporting on its back a porcelain tower which was filled with the choicest flowers; two candelabra in the same style, and several precious Chinese treasures. The fender, andirons, tongs, and shovel were all of the handsomest description.

The largest of the flower-stands was placed in the middle of the room, and above it hung a porcelain chandelier designed with wreaths of flowers.

The bed on which the old man's daughter lay was one of those beautiful white and gold carved bedsteads such as were made in the Louis XV. period. By the sick woman's pillow was a very pretty marquetry table, on which were the various articles necessary to this bedridden life. Against the wall was a bracket lamp with two branches, either of which could be moved forward or back by a mere touch of the hand. A small table, adapted to the use of the invalid, extended in front of her. The bed, covered with a beautiful counterpane, and draped with curtains held back by cords, was heaped with books, a work-basket, and articles of embroidery, beneath which Godefroid would scarcely have distinguished the sick woman herself had it not been for the light of the bracket lamps.

There was nothing of her to be seen but a face of extreme whiteness, browned around the eyes by suffering, in which shone eyes of fire, its principal adornment being a magnificent mass of black hair, the numerous heavy curls of which, carefully arranged, showed that the dressing of those beautiful locks occupied a good part of the invalid's morning. This supposition was further strengthened by the portable mirror which lay on the bed.

No modern arrangement for comfort was lacking. Even a few knick-knacks, which amused poor Vanda, proved that the father's love was almost fanatical.

The old man rose from an elegant Louis XV. sofa in white and gold, covered with tapestry, and advanced to Godefroid, who would certainly not have recognized him elsewhere ; for that cold, stern face now wore the gay expression peculiar to old men of the world, who retain the manners and apparent frivolity of the nobility about a court. His wadded violet gown was in keeping with this luxury, and he took snuff from a gold box studded with diamonds.

“Here, my dear daughter,” said Monsieur Bernard, taking Godefroid by the hand, “is the neighbor of whom I told you.”

He signed to his grandson to draw up one of two armchairs, similar in style to the sofa, which stood beside the fireplace.

“Monsieur’s name is Godefroid, and he is full of friendly kindness for us.”

Vanda made a motion with her head in answer to Godefroid’s low bow ; by the very way in which her neck bent and then recovered itself, Godefroid saw that the whole physical life of the invalid was in her head. The thin arms and flaccid hands lay on the fine, white linen of the sheets, like things not connected with the body, which, indeed, seemed to fill no place at all in the bed. The articles necessary for a sick person were on shelves standing behind the bedstead, and were concealed by a drawn curtain.

“You are the first person, monsieur, — except my doctors, who are not men to me, — whom I have seen for six years ; therefore you cannot doubt the interest you have excited in my mind, since my father told me this morning that you were to pay me a visit — interest ! no, it was an unconquerable curiosity, like that of our mother Eve. My father, who is so good to me, and my son, whom I love so much, do certainly suffice to fill the desert of a soul which is almost without a body ; but after all, that soul is still a woman’s ; I feel it in the childish joy the thought of your visit has brought me. You will do me the pleasure to take a cup of tea with us, I hope ?”

“Monsieur has promised to pass the evening here,” said the old man, with the air of a millionaire receiving a guest.

Auguste, sitting on a tapestried chair at a marquetry table with brass trimmings, was reading a book by the light of the candelabra on the chimney piece.

“Auguste, my dear,” said his mother, “tell Jean to serve tea in an hour. Would you believe it monsieur,” she added, “that for six years I have been waited upon wholly by my father and son, and now, I really think, I could bear no other attendance. If they were to fail me I should die. My father will not even allow Jean, a poor Norman who has served us for thirty years, to come into my room.”

"I should think not!" said the old man, quickly; "monsieur knows him; he chops wood and brings it in, and cooks; he wears dirty aprons, and would soon spoil all this elegance in which you take such pleasure — this room is really the whole of life to my poor daughter, monsieur."

"Ah! madame, your father is quite right."

"But why?" she said; "if Jean did any damage to my room my father would restore it."

"Yes, my child; but remember you could not leave it; you don't know what Parisian tradesmen are; they would take three months to renovate your room. Let Jean take care of it? no, indeed! how can you think of it? Auguste and I take such precautions that we allow no dust, and so avoid all sweeping."

"It is a matter of health, not economy," said Godefroid; "your father is right."

"I am not complaining," said Vanda, in a caressing voice.

That voice was a concert of delightful sounds. Soul, motion, life itself were concentrated in the glance and in the voice of this woman; for Vanda had succeeded by study, for which time was certainly not lacking to her, in conquering the difficulty produced by the loss of her teeth.

"I have much to make me happy in the midst of my sufferings, monsieur," she said; "and certainly ample

means are a great help in bearing trouble. If we had been poor I should have died eighteen years ago, but I still live. Oh, yes, I have many enjoyments, and they are all the greater because they are perpetually won from death. I am afraid you will think me quite garrulous," she added, smiling.

"Madame, I should like to listen to you forever," replied Godefroid; "I have never heard a voice that was comparable to yours; it is music; Rubini is not more enchanting."

"Don't speak of Rubini or the opera," said the old man, sadly. "That is a pleasure that, rich as I am, I cannot give to my daughter. She was once a great musician, and the opera was her greatest pleasure."

"Forgive me," said Godefroid.

"You will soon get accustomed to us," said the old man.

"Yes, and this is the process," said the sick woman, laughing; "when they've cried 'puss, puss, puss,' often enough you'll learn the puss-in-the-corner of our conversations."

Godefroid gave a rapid glance at Monsieur Bernard, who, seeing the tears in the eyes of his new neighbor, seemed to be making him a sign not to undo the results of the self-command he and his grandson had practised for so many years.

This sublime and perpetual imposture, proved by the

complete illusion of the sick woman, produced on Godefroid's mind the impression of an Alpine precipice down which two chamois hunters picked their way. The magnificent gold snuff-box enriched with diamonds with which the old man carelessly toyed as he sat by his daughter's bedside was like the stroke of genius which in the work of a great man elicits a cry of admiration. Godefroid looked at that snuff-box, wondering it had not been sold or found its way to the mont-de-piété.

"This evening, Monsieur Godefroid, my daughter received the announcement of your visit with such excitement that all the curious symptoms of her malady which have troubled us very much for the last twelve days have entirely disappeared. You can fancy how grateful I am to you."

"And I, too," said the invalid in her caressing tones, drooping her head with a motion full of coquetry. "Monsieur is to me a deputy from the world. Since I was twenty years old, monsieur, I have not seen a salon, or a party, or a ball. And I must tell you that I love dancing, and adore the theatre, especially the opera. I imagine everything by thought! I read a great deal; and then my father, who goes into society tells me about social events."

Godefroid made an involuntary movement as if to kneel at the old man's feet.

“ Yes, when he goes to the opera, and he often goes, he describes to me the singing and tells me about the dresses of the ladies. Oh! I would I were cured for the sake of my father, who lives solely for me as I live by him and for him, and then for my son, to whom I would fain be a real mother. Ah! monsieur, what blessed beings my old father and my good son are! I should also like to recover so as to hear Lablache, Rubini, Tamburini, Grisi, and ‘I Puritani.’ But — ”

“ Come, come, my child, be calm! If we talk music we are lost!” said the old man, smiling.

That smile, which rejuvenated his face, was evidently a perpetual deception to the sick woman.

“ Yes, yes, I ’ll be good,” said Vanda, with a petulant little air; “ but when will you give me an accordion?”

The portable instrument then called by that name had just been invented. It could, if desired, be placed at the edge of a bedstead, and only needed the pressure of a foot to give out the sounds of an organ. This instrument, in its highest development, was equal to a piano; but the cost of it was three hundred francs. Vanda, who read the newspapers and reviews, knew of the existence of the instrument, and had wished for one for the last two months.

“ Yes madame, you shall have one,” said Godefroid, after exchanging a look with the old man, “ A friend of mine who is just starting for Algiers has a fine instru-

ment and I will borrow it of him. Before buying, you had better try one. It is possible that the powerful, vibrating tones may be too much for you."

"Can I have it to-morrow?" she said, with the wilfulness of a creole.

"To-morrow?" said Monsieur Bernard, "that is soon; besides, to-morrow is Sunday."

"Ah!—" she exclaimed, looking at Godefroid, who fancied he could see a soul hovering in the air as he admired the ubiquity of Vanda's glances.

Until then, Godefroid had never known the power of voice and eyes when the whole of life is put into them. The glance was no longer a glance, a look, it was a flame, or rather, a divine incandescence, a radiance, communicating life and mind,—it was thought made visible. The voice, with its thousand intonations, took the place of motions, gestures, attitudes. The variations of the complexion, changing color like the famous chameleon, made the illusion, perhaps we should say the mirage, complete. That suffering head lying on the white pillow edged with laces was a whole person in itself.

Never in his life had Godefroid seen so wonderful a sight; he could scarcely control his emotions. Another wonder, for all was wondrous in this scene, so full of horror and yet of poesy, was that in those who saw it soul alone existed. This atmosphere, filled with

mental emotions only, had a celestial influence. Those present felt their bodies as little as the sick woman felt hers. They were all mind. As Godefroid contemplated that frail fragment of woman he forgot the surrounding elegancies of the room, and fancied himself beneath the open heavens. It was not until half an hour had passed that he came back to his sense of things about him ; he then noticed a fine picture, which the invalid asked him to examine, saying it was by Géricault.

“Géricault,” she told him, “came from Rouen ; his family were under certain obligations to my father, who was president of the court, and he showed his gratitude by painting that portrait of me when I was a girl of sixteen.”

“It is a beautiful picture,” said Godefroid ; “and quite unknown to those who are in search of the rare works of that master.”

“To me it is merely an object of affection,” replied Vanda ; “I live in my heart only — and it is a beautiful life,” she added, casting a look at her father in which she seemed to put her very soul. “Ah ! monsieur, if you only knew what my father really is ! Who would believe that the stern and lofty magistrate to whom the Emperor was under such obligations that he gave him that snuff-box, and on whom Charles X. bestowed as a reward that Sèvres tea-set which you see behind you, who would suppose that that rigid supporter of power

and law, that learned jurist, should have within his heart of rock the heart of a mother, too? Oh! papa, papa! kiss me, kiss me! come!”

The old man rose, leaned over the bed and kissed the broad poetic forehead of his daughter, whose passionate excitements did not always take the turn of this tempest of affection. Then he walked about the room; his slippers, embroidered by his daughter, making no noise.

“What are your occupations?” said Vanda to Godefroid, after a pause.

“Madame, I am employed by pious persons to help the unfortunate.”

“Ah! what a noble mission, monsieur!” she said. “Do you know the thought of devoting myself to that very work has often come to me? but ah! what ideas do not come to me?” she added, with a motion of her head. “Suffering is like a torch which lights up life. If I were ever to recover health — ”

“You should amuse yourself, my child,” said her father.

“Oh yes!” she said; “I have the desire, but should I then have the faculty? My son will be, I hope a magistrate, worthy of his two grandfathers, and he will leave me. What should I do then? If God restores me to life I will dedicate that life to Him — oh! after giving you all you need of it,” she cried, looking ten-

derly at her father and son. "There are moments, my dear father, when the ideas of Monsieur de Maistre work within me powerfully, and I fancy that I am expiating something."

"See what it is to read too much!" said the old man, evidently troubled.

"That brave Polish general, my great grandfather, took part, though very innocently, in the partition of Poland."

"Well, well! now it is Poland!" said Monsieur Bernard.

"How can I help it, papa? my sufferings are infernal; they give me a horror of life, they disgust me with myself. Well, I ask you, have I done anything to deserve them? Such diseases are not a mere derangement of health, they are caused by a perverted organization and —"

"Sing that national air your poor mother used to sing; Monsieur Godefroid wants to hear it; I have told him about your voice," said the old man, endeavoring to distract her mind from the current of such thoughts.

Vanda began, in a low and tender voice, to sing a Polish song which held Godefroid dumb with admiration and also with sadness. This melody, which greatly resembles the long drawn out melancholy airs of Brittany, is one of those poems which vibrate in the heart long

after the ear has heard them. As he listened, Godefroid looked at Vanda, but he could not endure the ecstatic glance of that fragment of a woman, partially insane, and his eyes wandered to two cords which hung one on each side of the canopy of the bed.

“Ah ha!” laughed Vanda, noticing his look, “do you want to know what those cords are for?”

“Vanda!” said her father, hastily, “calm yourself, my daughter. See! here comes tea. That, monsieur,” he continued, turning to Godefroid, “is rather a costly affair. My daughter cannot rise, and therefore it is difficult to change her sheets. Those cords are fastened to pulleys; by slipping a square of leather beneath her and drawing it up by the four corners with these pulleys, we are able to make her bed without fatigue to her or to ourselves.”

“They swing me!” cried Vanda, gayly.

Happily, Auguste now came in with a teapot, which he placed on a table, together with the Sèvres tea-set; then he brought cakes and sandwiches and cream. This sight diverted his mother’s mind from the nervous crisis which seemed to threaten her.

“See, Vanda, here is Nathan’s new novel. If you wake in the night you will have something to read.”

“Oh! delightful! ‘La Perle de Dol;’ it must be a love-story, — Auguste, I have something to tell you! I’m to have an accordion!”

Auguste looked up suddenly with a strange glance at his grandfather.

"See how he loves his mother!" cried Vanda. "Come and kiss me, my kitten. No, it is not your grandfather you are to thank, but monsieur, who is good enough to lend me one. I am to have it to-morrow. How are they made, monsieur?"

Godefroid, at a sign from the old man, explained an accordion at length, while sipping the tea which Auguste brought him and which was in truth, exquisite.

About half-past ten o'clock he retired, weary of beholding the desperate struggle of the son and father, admiring their heroism, and the daily, hourly patience with which they played their double parts, each equally exhausting.

"Well," said Monsieur Bernard, who followed him home, "you now see, monsieur, the life I live. I am like a thief, on the watch all the time. A word, a gesture might kill my daughter; a mere gewgaw less than she is accustomed to seeing about her would reveal all to that mind that can penetrate everything."

"Monsieur," replied Godefroid, "on Monday next Halpersohn shall pronounce upon your daughter. He has returned. I myself doubt the possibility of any science being able to revive that body."

"Oh! I don't expect that," cried the father; "all I ask is that her life be made supportable. I felt sure,

monsieur, of your sympathy, and I see that you have indeed comprehended everything — Ah! there's the attack coming on!" he exclaimed, as the sound of a cry came through the partition; "she went beyond her strength."

Pressing Godefroid's hand, the old man hurriedly returned to his own rooms.

At eight o'clock the next morning Godefroid knocked at the door of the celebrated Polish physician. He was shown by a footman to the first floor of a little house Godefroid had been examining while the porter was seeking and informing the footman.

Happily, Godefroid's early arrival saved him the annoyance of being kept waiting. He was, he supposed, the first comer. From a very plain and simple antechamber he passed into a large study, where he saw an old man in a dressing-gown smoking a long pipe. The dressing-gown, of black bombazine, shiny with use, dated from the period of the Polish emigration.

"What can I do for you?" said the Jewish doctor, "for I see you are not ill." And he fixed on his visitor a look which had the inquisitive, piercing expression of the eyes of a Polish Jew, eyes which seem to have ears of their own.

Halpersohn was, to Godefroid's great astonishment, a man of fifty-six years of age, with small bow-legs, and

a broad, powerful chest and shoulders. There was something oriental about the man, and his face in its youth must have been very handsome. The nose was Hebraic, long and curved like a Damascus blade. The forehead, truly Polish, broad and noble, but creased like a bit of crumpled paper, resembled that given by the old Italian masters to Saint Joseph. The eyes, of a sea-green, and circled, like those of parrots, with a gray and wrinkled membrane, expressed slyness and avarice in an eminent degree. The mouth, gashed into the face like a wound, added to the already sinister expression of the countenance all the sarcasm of distrust.

That pale, thin face, for Halpersohn's whole person was remarkably thin, surmounted by ill-kept gray hair, ended in a long and very thick, black beard, slightly touched with white, which hid fully half the face, so that nothing was really seen of it but the forehead, nose, eyes, cheek-bones, and mouth.

This friend of the revolutionist Lelewel wore a black velvet cap which came to a point on the brow, and took a high light worthy of the touch of Rembrandt.

The question of the physician (who has since become so celebrated, as much for his genius as for his avarice) caused some surprise in Godefroid's mind, and he said to himself: —

“ I wonder if he takes me for a thief.”

The answer to this mental question was on the doc-

tor's table and fireplace. Godefroid thought he was the first to arrive ; he was really the last. Preceding clients had left large offerings behind them ; among them Godefroid noticed piles of twenty and forty-franc gold pieces and two notes of a thousand francs each. Could that be the product of one morning ? He doubted it, and suspected the Pole of intentional trickery. Perhaps the grasping but infallible doctor took this method of showing his clients, mostly rich persons, that gold must be dropped into his pouch, and not buttons.

Moses Halpersohn was, undoubtedly, largely paid, for he cured, and he cured precisely those desperate diseases which medical science declares incurable. It is not known in Europe that the Slav races possess many secrets. They have a collection of sovereign remedies, the fruits of their connection with the Chinese, Persians, Cossacks, Turks, and Tartars. Certain peasant women in Poland, who pass for witches, cure insanity radically with the juice of herbs. A vast body of observations, not codified, exists in Poland on the effects of certain plants, and certain barks of trees reduced to powder, which are transmitted from father to son, and family to family, producing cures that are almost miraculous.

Halpersohn, who for five or six years was called a quack on account of his powders and herb medicines, had the innate science of a great physician. Not only had he studied much and observed much, but he

had travelled in every part of Germany, Russia, Persia, and Turkey, whence he had gathered many a traditional secret; and as he knew chemistry he became a living volume of those wonderful recipes scattered among the wise women, or, as the French call them, the *bonnes femmes*, of every land to which his feet had gone, following his father, a perambulating trader.

It must not be thought that the scene in "The Talisman" where Saladin cures the King of England is a fiction. Halpersohn possesses a silk purse which he steeps in water till the liquid is slightly colored; certain fevers yield immediately when the patient has drunk the prescribed dose of it. The virtue of plants, according to this man, is infinite, and the cure of the worst diseases possible. Nevertheless, he, like the rest of his professional brethren, stops short at certain incomprehensibilities. Halpersohn approved of the invention of homœopathy, more on account of its therapeutics than for its medical system; he was corresponding at this time with Hedenius of Dresden, Chelius of Heidelberg, and the celebrated German doctors, all the while holding his own hand closed, though it was full of discoveries. He wished for no pupils.

The frame was in keeping with this embodiment of a Rembrandt picture. The study, hung with a paper imitating green velvet, was shabbily furnished with a

green divan, the cover of which was threadbare. A worn-out green carpet was on the floor. A large armchair of black leather, intended for clients, stood before the window, which was draped with green curtains. A desk chair of Roman shape, made in mahogany and covered with green morocco, was the doctor's own seat.

Between the fireplace and the long table at which he wrote, a common iron safe stood against the wall, and on it was a clock of Viennese granite, surmounted by a group in bronze representing Cupid playing with Death, the present of a great German sculptor whom Halpersohn had doubtless cured. On the mantel-shelf was a vase between two candlesticks, and no other ornament. On either side of the divan were corner-buffets of ebony, holding plates and dishes, and Godefroid also noticed upon them two silver bowls, glass decanters, and napkins.

This simplicity, which amounted almost to bareness struck Godefroid, whose quick eye took it all in as he recovered his self-possession.

"Monsieur, I am, as you say, perfectly well myself; I have come on behalf of a woman to whom you were asked to pay a visit some time ago. She lives on the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse."

"Ah! yes; the lady who has sent her son here several times. Well, monsieur, let her come here to me."

"Come here!" repeated Godefroid, indignantly. "Monsieur, she cannot even be moved from her bed to a chair; they lift her with pulleys."

"You are not a physician, I suppose?" said the Jewish doctor, with a singular grimace which made his face appear more wicked than it really was.

"If the Baron de Nucingen sent word that he was ill and wanted you to visit him, would you reply, 'Let him come here to me'?"

"I should go to him," said the Jew, coldly, spitting into a Dutch pot made of mahogany and full of sand.

"You would go," said Godefroid, gently, "because the Baron de Nucingen has two millions a year, and —"

"The rest has nothing to do with the matter; I should go."

"Well, monsieur, you must go to the lady on the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse for the same reason. Without possessing the fortune of the Baron de Nucingen, I am here to tell you that you may yourself put a price upon this lady's cure, or upon your attendance if you fail; I am ready to pay it in advance. But perhaps, monsieur, as you are a Polish refugee and, I believe, a communist, the lady's parentage may induce you to make a sacrifice to Poland. She is the granddaughter of Colonel Tarlowski, the friend of Poniatowski."

"Monsieur, you came here to ask me to cure that lady, and not to give me advice. In Poland I am a

Pole ; in Paris I am Parisian. Every man does good in his own way ; the greed with which I am credited is not without its motive. The wealth I am amassing has its destination ; it is a sacred one. I sell health ; the rich can afford to purchase it, and I make them pay. The poor have their doctors. If I had not a purpose in view I would not practise medicine. I live soberly and I spend my time rushing hither and thither ; my natural inclination is to be lazy, and I used to be a gambler. Draw your conclusions, young man. You are too young still to judge old men."

Godefroid was silent.

"From what you say," went on the doctor, "the lady in question is the granddaughter of that imbecile who had no courage but that of fighting, and who took part in delivering over his country to Catherine II?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Well, be at her house Monday next at three o'clock," said Halpersohn, taking out a note-book in which he wrote a few words. "You will give me then two hundred francs ; and if I promise to cure the patient you will give me three thousand. I am told," he added, "that the lady has shrunk to almost nothing."

"Monsieur, if the most celebrated doctors in Paris are to be believed, it is a neurotic case of so extraordinary a nature that they denied the possibility of its symptoms until they saw them."

“Ah! yes, I remember now what the young lad told me. To-morrow, monsieur.”

Godefroid withdrew, after bowing to the man who seemed to him as odd as he was extraordinary. Nothing about him indicated a physician, not even the study, in which the most notable object was the iron safe, made by Huret or Fichet.

Godefroid had just time to get to the passage Vivienne before the shops closed for the day, and there he bought a superb accordion, which he ordered sent at once to Monsieur Bernard, giving the address.

XVI.

A LESSON IN CHARITY.

FROM the doctor's house Godefroid made his way to the rue Chanoinesse, passing along the quai des Augustins, where he hoped to find one of the shops of the commission-publishers open. He was fortunate enough to do so, and had a long talk with a young clerk on books of jurisprudence.

When he reached the rue Chanoinesse, he found Madame de la Chanterie and her friends just returning from high mass; in reply to the look she gave him Godefroid made her a significant sign with his head.

"Is n't our dear father Alain here to-day?" he said.

"No," she replied, "not this Sunday; you will not see him till a week from to-day — unless you go where he gave you rendezvous."

"Madame," said Godefroid in a low voice, "you know he does n't intimidate me as these gentlemen do; I wanted to make my report to him —"

"And I?"

"Oh you! I can tell you all; and I have a great deal to tell. For my first essay I have found a most

extraordinary misfortune ; a cruel mingling of pauperism and the need for luxuries ; also scenes of a sublimity which surpasses all the inventions of our greatest novelists."

"Nature, especially moral nature, is always greater than art, just as God is greater than his creatures. But come," said madame de la Chanterie, "tell me the particulars of your first trip into worlds unknown to you."

Monsieur Nicolas and Monsieur Joseph (for the Abbé de Vèze had remained a few moments in Notre-Dame) left Madame de la Chanterie alone with Godfroid, who, being still under the influence of the emotions he had gone through the night before, related even the smallest details of his story with the force and ardor and action of a first experience of such a spectacle and its attendant persons and things. His narrative had a great success ; for the calm and gentle Madame de la Chanterie wept, accustomed as she was to sound the depths of sorrows.

"You did quite right to send the accordion," she said.

"I would like to do a great deal more," said Godfroid ; "inasmuch as this family is the first that has shown me the pleasures of charity, I should like to obtain for that splendid old man a full return for his great book. I don't know if you have confidence

enough in my capacity to give me the means of undertaking such an affair. From information I have obtained, it will cost nine thousand francs to manufacture an edition of fifteen hundred copies, and their selling value will be twenty-four thousand francs. But as we should have to pay off the three thousand and some hundred francs due to Barbet, it would be an outlay of twelve thousand francs to risk. Oh! madame, if you only knew what bitter regrets I feel for having dissipated my little fortune! The spirit of charity has appeared to me; it fills me with the ardor of an initiate. I wish to renounce the world, I long to embrace the life of these gentlemen and be worthy of you. Many a time during the last two days I have blessed the chance that brought me to this house. I will obey you in all things until you judge me fit to be one of yours."

"Then," said Madame de la Chanterie, after reflecting for a time, "listen to me, for I have important things to tell you. You have been allured, my child, by the poesy of misfortune. Yes, misfortunes are often poetical; for, as I think, poesy is a certain effect on the sensibilities, and sorrows affect the sensibilities,—life is so intense in grief!"

"Yes, madame, I know that I have been gripped by the demon of curiosity. But how could I help it? I have not yet acquired the habit of penetrating to the

heart of these great misfortunes ; I cannot go among them with the calmness of your three soldiers of the Lord. But, let me tell you, it is since I have recovered from that first excitement that I have chiefly longed to devote myself to your work."

"Listen to me, my dear angel!" said Madame de la Chanterie, who uttered the last three words with a gentle solemnity that touched the young man strangely. "We have forbidden ourselves absolutely, — and we do not trifle with words here; what is forbidden no longer occupies our minds, — we have forbidden ourselves to enter into any speculations. To print a book for sale on the chance of profit is a matter of business, and any operation of that kind would throw us into all the entanglements of commerce. Certainly your scheme seems to me feasible, — even necessary. But do you think it is the first that has offered itself? A score of times, a hundred times, we have come upon just such ways of saving families, or firms. What would have become of us if we had taken part in such affairs? We should be merchants. No, our true partnership with misfortune is not to take the work into our own hands, but to help the unfortunate to work themselves. Before long you will meet with misfortunes more bitter still than these. Would you then do the same thing, — that is, take the burdens of those unfortunates wholly on yourself? You would soon be

overwhelmed. Reflect, too, my dear child, that for the last year even the Messieurs Mongenod find our accounts too heavy for them. Half your time would be taken up in merely keeping our books. We have to-day over two thousand debtors in Paris, and we must keep the record of their debts. Not that we ask for payment; we simply wait. We calculate that if half the money we expend is lost, the other half comes back to us, sometimes doubled. Now, suppose your Monsieur Bernard dies, the twelve thousand francs are probably lost. But if you cure his daughter, if his grandson is put in the way of succeeding, if he becomes, some day, a magistrate, then, when the family is prosperous, they will remember the debt, and return the money of the poor with usury. Do you know that more than one family whom we have rescued from poverty, and put upon their feet on the road to prosperity by loans of money without interest, have laid aside a portion for the poor, and have returned to us the money loaned doubled, and sometimes tripled? Those are our only speculations. Moreover, reflect that what is now interesting you so deeply (and you ought to be interested in it), namely, the sale of this lawyer's book, depends on the value of the work. Have you read it? Besides, though the book may be an excellent one, how many excellent books remain one, two, three years without obtaining the success they deserve. Alas! how many crowns of

fame are laid upon a grave ! I know that publishers have ways of negotiating and realizing profits which make their business the most hazardous to have to do with, and the most difficult to unravel, of all the trades of Paris. Monsieur Joseph can tell you of these difficulties, inherent in the making of books. Thus, you see, we are sensible ; we have experience of all miseries, also of all trades, for we have studied Paris for many years. The Mongenods have helped us in this ; they have been like torches to us. It is through them that we know how the Bank of France holds the publishing business under constant suspicion ; although it is one of the most profitable trades, it is unsound. As for the four thousand francs necessary to save this noble family from the horrors of penury, — for that poor boy and his grandfather must be fed and clothed properly, — I will give them to you at once. There are sufferings, miseries, wants, which we immediately relieve, without hesitation, without even asking whom we help ; religion, honor, character, are all indifferent to us ; but when it comes to lending money to the poor to assist them in any active form of industry or commerce, then we require guarantees, with all the sternness of usurers. So you must, my dear child, limit your enthusiasm for this unhappy family to finding for the father an honest publisher. This concerns Monsieur Joseph. He knows lawyers, professors, authors

of works on jurisprudence; I will speak to him, and next Sunday he will be sure to have some good advice to give you. Don't feel uneasy; some way will certainly be found to solve the difficulty. Perhaps it would be well, however, if Monsieur Joseph were to read the lawyer's book. If you think it can be done, you had better obtain the manuscript."

Godefroid was amazed at the good sense of this woman, whom he had thought controlled by the spirit of charity only. He took her beautiful hand and kissed it saying: —

"You are good sense and judgment, too!"

"We must be all that in our business," she replied, with the soft gayety of a real saint.

There was a moment's silence, and then Godefroid exclaimed: —

"Two thousand debtors! did you say that, madame? two thousand accounts to keep! why, it is immense!"

"Oh! I meant two thousand accounts which rely for liquidation, as I told you, on the delicacy and good feeling of our debtors; but there are fully three thousand other families whom we help who make us no other return than thanks to God. This is why we feel, as I told you, the necessity of keeping books ourselves. If you prove to us your discretion and capacity you shall be, if you like, our accountant. We keep a day-book, a ledger, a book of current accounts, and a

bank-book. We have many notes, but we lose a great deal of time in looking them up. Ah! here are the gentlemen," she added.

Godefroid, grave and thoughtful, took little part in the general conversation which now followed. He was stunned by the communication Madame de la Chanterie had just made to him, in a tone which implied that she wished to reward his ardor.

"Five thousand families assisted!" he kept repeating to himself. "If they were to cost what I am to spend on Monsieur Bernard, we must have millions scattered through Paris."

This thought was the last expiring movement of the spirit of the world, which had slowly and insensibly become extinguished in Godefroid. On reflection he saw that the united fortunes of Madame de la Chanterie, Messieurs Alain, Nicolas, Joseph, and that of Judge Popinot, the gifts obtained through the Abbé de Vèze, and the assistance lent by the firm of Mongenod must produce a large capital; and that this capital, increased during the last dozen years by grateful returns from those assisted, must have grown like a snowball, inasmuch as the charitable stewards of it spent so little on themselves. Little by little he began to see clearly into this vast work, and his desire to co-operate in it increased.

He was preparing at nine o'clock to return on foot to the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse; but Madame de la

Chanteric, fearing the solitude of that neighborhood at a late hour, made him take a cab. When he reached the house Godefroid heard the sound of an instrument, though the shutters were so carefully closed that not a ray of light issued through them. As soon as he reached the landing, Auguste, who was probably on the watch for him, opened the door of Monsieur Bernard's apartment and said:—

“Mamma would like to see you, and my grandfather offers you a cup of tea.”

When Godefroid entered, the patient seemed to him transfigured by the pleasure she felt in making music; her face was radiant, her eyes were sparkling like diamonds.

“I ought to have waited to let you hear the first sounds,” she said to Godefroid, “but I flung myself upon the little organ as a starving man flings himself on food. You have a soul that comprehends me, and I know you will forgive.”

Vanda made a sign to her son, who placed himself in such a way as to press with his foot the pedal which filled the bellows; and then the invalid, whose fingers had for the time recovered all their strength and agility, raising her eyes to heaven like Saint Cecilia, played the “Prayer of Moses in Egypt,” which her son had bought for her and which she had learned by heart in a few hours. Godefroid recognized in her playing the same

quality as in Chopin's. The soul was manifested by divine sounds of which the dominant note was that of tender melancholy. Monsieur Bernard had received Godefroid with a look that was long a stranger to his eyes. If tears were not forever dried at their source, withered by such scorching sorrows, that look would have been tearful.

The old man sat playing with his snuff-box and looking at his daughter in silent ecstasy.

"To-morrow, madame," said Godefroid, when the music ceased; "to-morrow your fate will be decided. I bring you good news. The celebrated Halpersohn is coming to see you at three o'clock in the afternoon. He has promised," added Godefroid in a low voice to Monsieur Bernard, "to tell me the exact truth."

The old man rose, and grasping Godefroid's hand, drew him to a corner of the room beside the fireplace.

"Ah! what a night I shall pass! a definitive decision! My daughter cured or doomed!"

"Courage!" said Godefroid; "after tea come out with me."

"My child, my child, don't play any more," said the old man; "you will bring on an attack; such a strain upon your strength must end in reaction."

He made Auguste take away the instrument and offered a cup of tea to his daughter with the coaxing manner of a nurse quieting the petulance of a child.

“What is the doctor like?” she asked, her mind already distracted by the prospect of seeing a new person.

Vanda, like all prisoners, was full of eager curiosity. When the physical phenomena of her malady ceased, they seemed to betake themselves to the moral nature; she conceived the strangest fancies, the most violent caprices; she insisted on seeing Rossini, and wept when her father, whom she believed to be all powerful, refused to fetch him.

Godefroid now gave her a minute account of the Jewish doctor and his study; of which she knew nothing, for Monsieur Bernard had cautioned Auguste not to tell his mother of his visits to Halpersohn, so much had he feared to rouse hopes in her mind which might not be realized.

Vanda hung upon Godefroid's words like one fascinated; and she fell into a sort of ecstasy in her passionate desire to see this strange Polish doctor.

“Poland has produced many singular, mysterious beings,” said Monsieur Bernard. “To-day, for instance, besides this extraordinary doctor, we have Hoëné Wronski the enlightened mathematician, the poet Mickiewicz, Towianski the mystic, and Chopin, whose talent is supernatural. Great national convulsions always produce various species of dwarfed giants.”

“Oh! dear papa; what a man you are! If you

would only write down what we hear you say merely to amuse me you would make your reputation. Fancy, monsieur, my dear old father invents wonderful stories when I have no novels to read; he often puts me to sleep in that way. His voice lulls me, and he quiets my mind with his wit. Who can ever reward him? Auguste, my child, you ought for my sake, to kiss the print of your grandfather's footsteps."

The young man raised his beautiful moist eyes to his mother, and the look he gave her, full of a long-repressed compassion, was a poem. Godefroid rose, took the lad's hand, and pressed it.

"God has placed two angels beside you, madame," he said.

"Yes, I know that. And for that reason I often reproach myself for harassing them. Come, my dear Auguste, and kiss your mother. He is a child, monsieur, of whom all mothers might be proud; pure as gold, frank and honest, a soul without sin — but too passionate a soul, alas! like that of his poor mother. Perhaps God has fastened me to this bed to keep me from the follies of women — who have too much heart," she added, smiling.

Godefroid replied with a smile and a bow.

"Adieu, monsieur; and thank your friend for the instrument; tell him it makes the happiness of a poor cripple."

“Monsieur,” said Godefroid, when they were alone in the latter’s room. “I think I may assure you that you shall not be robbed by that trio of bloodsuckers. I have the necessary sum to free your book, but you must first show me your written agreement with them. And after that, in order to do still more for you, you must let me have your work to read, — not I myself, of course, I have not knowledge enough to judge of it, but a former magistrate, a lawyer of eminence and of perfect integrity, who will undertake, according to what he thinks of the book, to find you an honorable publisher with whom you can make an equitable agreement. This, however, I will not insist upon. Meantime here are five hundred francs,” he added, giving a bank-note to the stupefied old man, “to meet your present needs. I do not ask for any receipt; you will be under obligations to your own conscience only, and that conscience is not to move you until you have recovered a sufficient competence, — I undertake to pay Halpersohn.”

“Who are you, then?” asked the old man, dropping into a chair.

“I myself,” replied Godefroid, “am nothing; but I serve powerful persons to whom your distress is known, and who feel an interest in you. Ask me nothing more about them.”

“But what induces them to do this?” said the old man.

“Religion.”

“Religion! is it possible?”

“Yes, the catholic, apostolic, and Roman religion.”

“Ah! do you belong to the order of Jesus?”

“No, monsieur,” replied Godefroid. “Do not feel uneasy; these persons have no designs upon you, except that of helping you to restore your family to prosperity.”

“Can philanthropy be anything but vanity?”

“Ah! monsieur,” said Godefroid, hastily; “do not insult the virtue defined by Saint Paul, sacred, catholic Love!”

Monsieur Bernard, hearing this answer, began to stride up and down with long steps.

“I accept,” he said suddenly, “and I have but one way of thanking you, and that is to offer you my work. The notes and citations are unnecessary to the magistrate you speak of; and I have still two months’ work to do in arranging them for the press. To-morrow I will give you the five volumes,” he added, offering Godefroid his hand.

“Can I have made a conversion?” thought Godefroid, struck by the new expression which he saw on the old man’s face.

XVII.

HALPERSOHN.

THE next afternoon at three o'clock a cabriolet stopped before the house, and Godefroid saw Halpersohn getting out of it, wrapped in a monstrous bear-skin pelisse. The cold had strengthened during the night, the thermometer marking ten degrees of it.

The Jewish doctor examined with curious eyes, though furtively, the room in which his client of the day before received him, and Godefroid detected the suspicious thought which darted from his eyes like the sharp point of a dagger. This rapid conception of distrust gave Godefroid a cold chill, for he thought within himself that such a man would be pitiless in all relations; it is so natural to suppose that genius is connected with goodness that a strong sensation of disgust took possession of him.

"Monsieur," he said, "I see that the simplicity of my room makes you uneasy; therefore you need not be surprised at my method of proceeding. Here are your two hundred francs, and here, too, are three notes of a thousand each," he added, drawing from his pocket-book

the money Madame de la Chanterie had given him to release Monsieur Bernard's book ; but in case you still feel doubtful of my solvency I offer you as reference Messrs. Mongenod, bankers, rue de la Victoire."

"I know them," said Halpersohn, putting the ten gold pieces into his pocket.

"He'll inquire of them," thought Godefroid.

"Where is the patient?" asked the doctor, rising like a man who knows the value of time.

"This way, monsieur," said Godefroid, preceding him to show the way.

The Jew examined with a shrewd and suspicious eye the places he passed through, giving them the keen, rapid glance of a spy ; he saw all the horrors of poverty through the door of the room in which the grandfather and the grandson lived ; for, unfortunately, Monsieur Bernard had gone in to change his clothes before entering his daughter's room, and in his haste to open the outer door to the doctor, he had forgotten to close that of his lair.

He bowed in a stately manner to Halpersohn, and opened the door of his daughter's room cautiously.

"Vanda, my child, here is the doctor," he said.

Then he stood aside to allow Halpersohn, who kept on his bear-skin pelisse, to pass him. The Jew was evidently surprised at the luxury of the room, which in this quarter, and more especially in this house, was an

anomaly ; but his surprise only lasted for an instant, for he had seen among German and Russian Jews many instances of the same contrast between apparent misery and hoarded wealth. As he walked from the door to the bed he kept his eye on the patient, and the moment he reached her he said in Polish : —

“ You are a Pole ? ”

“ No, I am not ; my mother was.”

“ Whom did your grandfather, Colonel Tarlowski, marry ? ”

“ A Pole.”

“ From what province ? ”

“ A Sobolewska, of Pinsk.”

“ Very good ; monsieur is your father ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Monsieur,” he said, turning to the old man ; “ your wife — ”

“ Is dead ; ” said Monsieur Bernard.

“ Was she very fair ? ” said Halpersohn, showing a slight impatience at being interrupted.

“ Here is her portrait,” said Monsieur Bernard, unhooking from the wall a handsome frame which inclosed several fine miniatures.

Halpersohn felt the head and handled the hair of the patient while he looked at the portrait of Vanda Tarlowska, born Countess Sobolewska.

“ Relate to me the symptoms of your illness,” he

said, placing himself on the sofa and looking fixedly at Vanda during the twenty minutes the history, given alternately by the father and daughter, lasted.

“How old are you?”

“Thirty-eight.”

“Ah! good!” he cried, rising; “I will answer for the cure. Mind, I do not say that I can restore the use of her legs; but cured of the disease, that she shall be. Only, I must have her in a private hospital under my own eye.”

“But, monsieur, my daughter cannot be moved!”

“I will answer for her,” said Halpersohn, curtly; “but I will answer for her only on those conditions. She will have to exchange her present malady for another still more terrible, which may last a year, six months at the very least. You may come and see her at the hospital, since you are her father.”

“Are you certain of curing her?” said Monsieur Bernard.

“Certain,” repeated the Jew. “Madame has in her body an element, a vitiated fluid, the national disease, and it must be eliminated. You must bring her to me at Chaillot, rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, private hospital of Doctor Halpersohn.”

“How can I?”

“On a stretcher, just as all sick persons are carried to hospitals.”

“ But the removal will kill her ! ”

“ No.”

As he said the word in a curt tone he was already at the door ; Godefroid rejoined him on the staircase. The Jew, who was stifling with heat, said in his ear :

“ Besides the three thousand francs, the cost will be fifteen francs a day, payable three months in advance.”

“ Very good, monsieur. And,” continued Godefroid, putting one foot on the step of the cabriolet, into which the doctor had sprung, “ you say you will answer for the cure ? ”

“ I will answer for it,” said the Jewish doctor. “ Are you in love with the lady ? ”

“ No,” replied Godefroid.

“ You must not repeat what I am about to say to you ; I only say it to prove to you that I am certain of a cure. If you are guilty of the slightest indiscretion you will kill her.”

Godefroid replied with a gesture only.

“ For the last seventeen years she has been a victim to the element in her system called *plica polonica*,¹

¹ Balzac's description of *plica polonica* does not agree with that given in English medical dictionaries and cyclopedias. But as the book was written at Wierschovnia, Poland, in 1847, when he was attended by a celebrated Polish physician, and as, moreover, he was always so scrupulously accurate in his descriptions, it is fair to suppose that he knew of some form of the disease other than that given in the books. His account probably applies to the period before it takes the visible form described in the books.

which has produced all these ravages. I have seen more terrible cases than this. Now, I alone in the present day know how to bring this disease to a crisis, and force it outward so as to obtain a chance to cure it — for it cannot always be cured. You see, monsieur, that I am disinterested. If this lady were of great importance, a Baronne de Nucingen, or any other wife or daughter of a modern Cræsus, this cure would bring me one hundred — two hundred thousand francs; in short, anything I chose to ask for it. However, it is only a trifling loss to me.”

“About conveying her?”

“Bah! she'll seem to be dying, but she won't die. There's life enough in her to last a hundred years, when the disease is out of her system. Come, Jacques, drive on! quick, — rue de Monsieur! quick!” he said to his man.

Godefroid was left on the boulevard gazing stupidly after the cabriolet.

“Who is that queer man in a bearskin?” asked Madame Vauthier, whom nothing escaped; “is it true, what the man in the cabriolet told me, that he is one of the greatest doctors in Paris?”

“What is that to you?”

“Oh! nothing at all,” she replied, making a face.

“You made a great mistake in not putting yourself on my side,” said Godefroid, returning slowly to the

house ; "you would have made more out of me than you will ever get from Barbet and Métivier ; from whom, mark my words, you 'll get nothing."

"I am not for them particularly," said Madame Vauthier, shrugging her shoulders ; " Monsieur Barbet is my proprietor, that's all ! "

It required two days' persuasion to induce Monsieur Bernard to separate from his daughter and take her to Chaillot. Godefroid and the old man made the trip walking on each side of the litter, canopied with blue and white striped linen, in which was the dear patient, partly bound to a mattress, so much did her father dread the possible convulsions of a nervous attack. They started at three o'clock and reached their destination at five just as evening was coming on. Godefroid paid the sum demanded for three months' board in advance, being careful to obtain a receipt for the money. When he went back to pay the bearers of the litter, he was followed by Monsieur Bernard, who took from beneath the mattress a bulky package carefully sealed up, and gave it to Godefroid.

"One of these men will fetch you a cab," said the old man ; "for you cannot carry these four volumes under your arm. That is my book ; give it to your reader ; he may keep it the whole of the coming week. I shall stay at least that time in this quarter ; for I cannot leave my daughter in such total abandonment.

I trust my grandson ; he can take care of our rooms ; especially if you will keep an eye on him. If I were what I once was I would ask you the name of my critic, the former magistrate you spoke of ; there were but few of them whom I did not know."

"Oh, there's no mystery about it!" said Godefroid, interrupting Monsieur Bernard. "Now that you have shown this entire confidence in trusting me with your book, I will tell you that your censor is the former president, Lecamus de Tresnes."

"Oh, yes!—of the Royal Court of Paris. Take him the book ; he is one of the noblest characters of the present day. He and the late Popinot, a judge of the Lower Court, were both worthy of the days of the old Parliaments. All my fears, if I had any, are dissipated. Where does he live? I should like to go and thank him for the trouble he is taking."

"You will find him in the rue Chanoinesse, under the name of Monsieur Joseph. I am going there now. Where is that agreement you made with your swindlers?"

"Auguste will give it to you," said the old man, re-entering the courtyard of the hospital.

A cab was now brought up by the porter, and Godefroid jumped into it, — promising the coachman a good pourboire if he would get him to the rue Chanoinesse in good time, for he wanted to dine there.

Half an hour after Vanda's departure, three men dressed in black, whom Madame Vauthier let into the house by the door on the rue Notre-Dame des Champs, filed up the staircase, accompanied by their female Judas, and knocked gently at the door of Monsieur Bernard's lodging. As it happened to be a Thursday, Auguste was at home. He opened the door, and the three men glided in like shadows.

"What do you want, messieurs?" asked the lad.

"These are the rooms of Monsieur Bernard, — that is, Monsieur le baron, — are they not?"

"Yes; but what do you want?"

"You know very well, young man, what we want! We are informed that your grandfather has left the house with a covered litter. That's not surprising; he had the right to do so. But I am the sheriff, and I have come to seize everything he has left. On Monday he received a summons to pay three thousand francs, with interest and costs, to Monsieur Métivier, under pain of arrest for debt duly notified to him, and like an old stager who is up to the tricks of his own trade, he has walked off just in time. However, if we can't catch him, his furniture has n't taken wings. You see we know all about it, young man."

"Here are the stamped papers your grandpapa did n't choose to take," said Madame Vauthier, thrusting three writs into Auguste's hand.

"Remain here, madame," said the sheriff; "we shall make you legal guardian of the property. The law gives you forty sous a day, and that's not to be sneezed at."

"Ha! now I shall see the inside of that fine bedroom!" cried the Vauthier.

"You shall not go into my mother's room!" said the young lad, in a threatening voice, springing between the door and the three men in black.

At a sign from the sheriff, two of the men seized Auguste.

"No resistance, young man; you are not master here," said the sheriff. "We shall draw up the procès-verbal, and you will sleep in jail."

Hearing that dreadful word, Auguste burst into tears.

"Ah, how fortunate," he cried, "that mamma has gone! it would have killed her."

A conference now took place between the sheriff, the other men, and Vauthier, by which Auguste discovered, although they spoke in a low voice, that his grandfather's manuscripts were what they chiefly wanted. On that, he opened the door of his mother's bedroom.

"Go in," he said, "but take care to do no injury. You will be paid to-morrow morning."

Then he went off weeping into the lair, seized his

grandfather's notes and stuck them into the stove, in which, as he knew very well, there was not a spark of fire.

The thing was done so rapidly that the sheriff—a sly, keen fellow, worthy of his clients Barbet and Méti-vier—found the lad weeping in his chair when he entered the wretched room, after assuring himself that the manuscripts were not in the antechamber.

Though it is not permissible to seize books or manuscripts for debt, the bill of sale which Monsieur Bernard had made of his work justified this proceeding. It was, however, easy to oppose various delays to this seizure, and Monsieur Bernard, had he been there, would not have failed to do so. For that reason the whole affair had been conducted slyly. Madame Vauthier had not attempted to give the writs to Monsieur Bernard; she meant to have flung them into the room on entering behind the sheriff's men, so to give the appearance of their being in the old man's possession.

The procès-verbal of the seizure took an hour to write down; the sheriff omitted nothing, and declared that the value of the property seized was sufficient to pay the debt. As soon as he and his men had departed, Auguste took the writs and rushed to the hospital to find his grandfather. The sheriff having told him that Madame Vauthier was now responsible, under heavy

penalties, for the safety of the property, he could leave the house without fear of robbery.

The idea of his grandfather being dragged to prison for debt drove the poor lad, if not exactly crazy, at any rate as crazy as youth becomes under one of those dangerous and fatal excitements in which all powers ferment at once, and lead as often to evil actions as to heroic deeds. When he reached the rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, the porter told him that he did not know what had become of the father of the lady who had arrived that afternoon; the orders of Monsieur Halpersohn were to admit no one to see her for the next eight days, under pain of putting her life in danger.

This answer brought Auguste's exasperation to a crisis. He returned to the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, turning over in his mind the wildest and most extravagant plans of action. He reached home at half-past eight o'clock, half famished, and so exhausted with hunger and distress that he listened to Madame Vauthier when she asked him to share her supper, which happened to be a mutton stew with potatoes. The poor lad fell half dead upon a chair in that atrocious woman's room.

Persuaded by the wheedling and honeyed words of the old vulture, he replied to a few questions about Godefroid which she adroitly put to him, letting her discover that it was really her other lodger who was to pay his

grandfather's debts the next day, and also that it was to him they owed the improvement in their condition during the past week. The widow listened to these confidences with a dubious air, plying Auguste with several glasses of wine meantime. .

About ten o'clock a cab stopped before the house, and Madame Vauthier looking out exclaimed:—

“ Oh ! it is Monsieur Godefroid.”

Auguste at once took the key of his apartment and went up to meet the protector of his family ; but he found Godefroid's face and manner so changed that he hesitated to address him until, generous lad that he was, the thought of his grandfather's danger came over him and gave him courage.

XVIII.

WHO MONSIEUR BERNARD WAS.

THE cause of this change and of the sternness in Godefroid's face was an event which had just taken place in the rue Chanoinesse. When the initiate arrived there he found Madame de la Chanterie and her friends assembled in the salon awaiting dinner ; and he instantly took Monsieur Joseph apart to give him the four volumes on "The Spirit of Modern Laws." Monsieur Joseph took the voluminous manuscript to his room and returned for dinner ; then, after sharing in the conversation for part of the evening, he went back to his room, intending to begin the reading of the book that night.

Godefroid was much astonished when Manon came to him soon after Monsieur Joseph's retirement and asked if he would at once go up and speak to that gentleman. He went up, conducted by Manon, and was unable to pay any heed to the apartment (which he had never before entered) so amazed was he by the agitated look and manner of a man who was usually calm and placid.

“Do you know,” asked Monsieur Joseph, once more a judge, “who the author of this work is?”

“He is Monsieur Bernard,” said Godefroid; “I know him only under that name. I did not open the package.”

“True,” said Monsieur Joseph, as if to himself, “I broke the seals myself. You have not tried to find out anything about his antecedents?”

“No, I only know that he made a love-match with the daughter of General Tarlowski; that the daughter is named after the mother, Vanda; the grandson is called Auguste; and I have seen a portrait of Monsieur Bernard in the red robes of a president of the Royal Courts.”

“Here, read that,” said Monsieur Joseph, pointing to the titlepage of the manuscript, written probably in Auguste’s handwriting:—

ON THE

SPIRIT OF MODERN LAWS.

BY M. BERNARD-JEAN-BAPTISTE MACLOUD,

BARON BOURLAC.

Formerly attorney-general to the Royal Court of Rouen.

Grand officer of the Legion of honor.

“Ha! the slayer of Madame’s daughter! of the Chevalier du Vissard! the man who condemned her to twenty years’ imprisonment!” said Godefroid, in a

feeble voice. His legs gave way under him, and he dropped into a chair. "What a beginning!" he muttered.

"This matter, my dear Godefroid," resumed Monsieur Joseph, "concerns us all. You have done your part; leave the rest to us. I beg you to have no more to do with it; go and fetch the things you have left behind you. Don't say a word of all this. Practise absolute discretion. Tell the Baron de Bourlac to address himself to me. By that time we shall have decided how to act under the circumstances."

Godefroid left him, took a cab, and went back as fast as he could to the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, filled with horror as he remembered that indictment signed with Bourlac's name, the bloody drama ending on the scaffold, and Madame de la Chanterie's imprisonment at Bicêtre. He understood now the abandonment in which this former attorney-general, another Fouquier-Tinville in the public mind, was ending his days, and the true reasons for the concealment of his name.

"May Monsieur Joseph avenge her terribly!" he thought. As he uttered the wish in his own mind, he saw Auguste.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"My good friend, such a dreadful misfortune has overtaken us that I am almost mad. Wretches have come here and seized all my mother's property, and

they are going to put my grandfather in prison. But it is not on account of those misfortunes that I come to implore you," said the lad, with Roman pride; "it is to ask you to do me a service such as people do to those who are condemned to die."

"Go on, what is it?" said Godefroid.

"They came here to seize my grandfather's manuscripts; and as I think he gave you the book itself I want you to take the notes, for Madame Vauthier will not let me carry anything out of the house. Put them with the volumes and —"

"Yes, yes," said Godefroid, "go and get them at once."

While the lad went back to his own rooms, returning immediately, Godefroid reflected that the poor child was guilty of no crime, and that he ought not to put despair into that young heart by speaking of his grandfather and of the punishment for his savage political actions that had overtaken his sad old age. He therefore took the little package with a good grace.

"What is your mother's name?" he asked.

"My mother is the Baronne de Mergi; my father was the son of the president of the Royal Court at Rouen."

"Ah!" said Godefroid; "then your grandfather married his daughter to the son of the famous president Mergi."

"Yes, monsieur."

"Now, my little friend, leave me," said Godefroid. He went with young Mergi to the landing, and called to Madame Vauthier.

"Mère Vauthier," he said, "you can let my rooms. I shall not come back any more."

He gathered his things together, went downstairs, and got into the cab.

"Have you given anything to that gentleman?" said the Vauthier to Auguste.

"Yes," said the young man.

"You're a pretty fellow! that's the agent of your grandfather's enemies. He managed this whole business, and the proof is that, now that the trick is played, he goes off and is n't coming back any more. He has just told me I can let his lodging."

Auguste flew to the boulevard and ran after the cab shouting so loudly that he finally stopped it.

"What do you want?" asked Godefroid.

"My grandfather's manuscripts."

"Tell them he can get them from Monsieur Joseph."

The youth thought the words were intended as a cruel joke. He sat down in the snow as he saw the cab disappearing rapidly. Presently he sprang up with momentary vigor, returned to his room and went to bed worn out with fatigue and distress.

The next morning, when the poor boy woke alone in

that apartment so lately occupied by his mother and grandfather, the painful emotions of his cruel position filled his mind. The solitude of his home, where up to this time every moment had had its duty and its occupation, seemed so hard to bear that he went down to Madame Vauthier to ask if she had received any news of his grandfather. The woman answered sneeringly that he knew very well, or he might know, where to find his grandfather; the reason why he had not come in, she said, was because he had gone to live at the château de Clichy. This malicious speech, from the woman who had coaxed and wheedled him the evening before, put the lad into another frenzy, and he rushed to the hospital once more, desperate with the idea that his grandfather was in prison.

Baron Bourlac had wandered all night round the hospital, where he was refused entrance, and round the private residence of Dr. Halpersohn from whom he wished, naturally, to obtain an explanation of such treatment. The doctor did not get home till two in the morning. At half-past one the old man was at his door; on being told he was absent, he turned and walked about the grand alley of the Champs Élysées until half-past two. When he again went to the house, the porter told him that Monsieur Halpersohn had returned, gone to bed, was asleep, and could not be disturbed.

The poor father, in despair, wandered along the quay and under the frost-laden trees of the Cours-la-reine, waiting for daylight. At nine o'clock in the morning he again presented himself at the doctor's house, demanding to know the reason why his daughter was thus virtually imprisoned.

"Monsieur," replied the doctor, to whose presence he was admitted, "yesterday I told you I would answer for your daughter's recovery; but to-day I am responsible for her life, and you will readily understand that I must be the sovereign master in such a case. Yesterday your daughter took a medicine intended to bring out her disease, the *plica polonica*; until that horrible disease shows itself on the surface you cannot see her. I will not allow excitement or any mistake of management to carry off my patient and your daughter. If you positively insist on seeing her, I shall call a consultation of three physicians, so as to relieve myself of responsibility, for the patient may die of it."

The old man, worn out with fatigue, dropped on a chair; but he rose immediately, saying:—

"Forgive me, monsieur. I have spent the night waiting for you in dreadful distress of mind. You cannot know to what degree I love my daughter; I have nursed her for fifteen years hovering between life and death, and this week of waiting is torture to me."

The baron left the room staggering like a drunken

man. The doctor followed and supported him by the arm until he saw him safely down the staircase.

An hour later Auguste de Mergi entered the doctor's room. On questioning the porter at the hospital the unhappy lad heard that his grandfather had been refused an entrance and had gone away to find Monsieur Halpersohn, who could probably give information about him. As Auguste entered the doctor's study Halpersohn was breakfasting on a cup of chocolate and a glass of water. He did not disturb himself at the young man's entrance, but went on sopping his bread in the chocolate ; for he never ate anything for breakfast but a small roll cut into four strips with careful precision.

"Well, young man," he said, glancing at Vanda's son, "so you have come, too, to find out about your mother?"

"Yes, monsieur ;" replied Auguste de Mergi.

Auguste was standing near the table on which lay several bank-notes among a pile of gold louis. Under the circumstances in which the unhappy boy was placed the temptation was stronger than his principles, solid as they were. He saw a means of saving his grandfather and the fruits of almost a lifetime of toil. He yielded. The fascination was rapid as thought ; and it was justified to the child's mind by the idea of self-devotion. "I destroy myself, but I save my mother and my grandfather," he thought. Under the strain

put upon his reason by this criminal temptation he acquired, like madmen, a singular and momentary dexterity.

Halpersohn, an experienced observer, had divined, retrospectively, the life of the old man and that of the lad and of the mother. He felt or perceived the truth; the Baronne de Mergi's remarks had helped to unveil it to him; and the result was a feeling of benevolent pity for his new clients. As for respect or admiration, he was incapable of those emotions.

"Well, my dear boy," he replied familiarly, "I am taking care of your mother, and I shall return her to you young and handsome and perfectly well in health. Hers is one of those rare cases in which physicians take an interest. Besides, through her mother, she is a compatriot of mine. You and your grandfather must for two weeks have the courage to keep away from Madame —?"

"The Baronne de Mergi."

"Ah! if she is a baroness, you must be a baron," remarked Halpersohn.

At that instant the theft was accomplished. While the doctor was looking at his sopped bread heavy with chocolate, Auguste snatched four notes and put them into his pocket, as if he were merely putting his hand there by accident.

"Yes, monsieur," he replied, "I am a baron, and so is

my grandfather; he was attorney-general under the Restoration."

"You blush, young man; there's no need to blush for being a poor baron; that's common enough."

"Who told you, monsieur, that we are poor?"

"Your grandfather told me he had spent the night in the Champs Élysées; and though I know no palace with half so fine a ceiling as that of the skies at two o'clock this morning, I assure you it was pretty cold in the palace where your grandfather passed the night. We don't select the 'Star' inn from choice."

"Has my grandfather been here this morning?" said Auguste, seizing the opportunity to get away. "I thank you, monsieur, and I will call again, if you will permit me, to ask for news of my mother."

As soon as he was in the street the young baron took a cab to go as rapidly as he could to the sheriff's office, where he paid his grandfather's debt. The sheriff gave him the papers and a receipted bill of costs, and told one of his clerks to accompany the young man home and relieve the legal guardian of her functions.

"As Messieurs Barbet and Métivier live in your quarter," he said, "I will tell my young man to carry the money there and obtain the bill of sale of the books and return it to you."

Auguste who did not understand either the terms or the formalities of the law, did exactly as he was told.

He received seven hundred francs change from the four thousand francs he had stolen, and went away with the clerk. He got back into the cab in a condition of semi-stupor; for, the result being now obtained, remorse began; he saw himself dishonored, cursed by his grandfather, whose inflexible nature was well-known to him, and he felt that his mother would surely die if she knew him guilty. All nature changed for him. He was hot; he did not see the snow; the houses looked like spectres flitting past him.

By the time he reached home the young baron had decided on his course, which was certainly that of an honest man. He went to his mother's room, took the gold snuff-box set with diamonds given to his grandfather by the Emperor, and wrapped it in a parcel with the seven hundred francs and the following letter, which required several rough copies before it was satisfactory. Then he directed the whole to Doctor Halpersohn: —

MONSIEUR, — The fruits of twenty years of my grandfather's toil were about to be seized by usurers, who even threatened to put him in prison. Three thousand three hundred francs were enough to save him. Seeing all that money on your table, I could not resist the happiness of freeing my grandfather from his danger. I borrowed, without your consent, four thousand francs of you; but as three thousand three hundred were all that was necessary, I send the other seven hundred in money, together with a gold

snuff-box set with diamonds, given to my grandfather by the Emperor, the value of which will probably cover the whole sum.

In case you do not believe in the honor of him who will forever regard you as a benefactor, I pray you to keep silence about an act which would be quite unjustifiable under other circumstances; for by so doing you will save my grandfather's life, just as you are saving my mother's life; and I shall be forever

Your devoted servant,

AUGUSTE DE MERGI.

About half-past two o'clock in the afternoon, Auguste, who went himself as far as the Champs Élysées, sent the package from there by a street messenger to Doctor Halpersohn's house; then he walked slowly homeward by the pont de Jéna, the Invalides, and the boulevards, relying on Halpersohn's generosity.

The Polish doctor had meantime discovered the theft, and he instantly changed his opinion of his clients. He now thought the old man had come to rob him, and being unable to succeed, had sent the boy. He doubted the rank they had claimed, and went straight to the police-office, where he lodged a complaint, requesting that the lad might be arrested at once.

The prudence with which the law proceeds seldom allows it to move as rapidly as complainants desire; but about three o'clock of that day a commissary of

police, accompanied by agents who kept watch outside the house, was questioning Madame Vauthier as to her lodgers, and the widow was increasing, without being aware of it, the suspicions of the policeman.

When Népomucène saw the police agents stationed outside the house, he thought they had come to arrest the old man, and as he was fond of Monsieur Auguste, he rushed to meet Monsieur Bernard, whom he now saw on his way home in the avenue de l'Observatoire.

"Hide yourself, monsieur!" he cried, "the police have come to arrest you. The sheriff was here yesterday and seized everything. Madame Vauthier didn't give you the stamped papers, and she says you'll be in Clichy to-night or to-morrow. There, don't you see those policemen?"

Baron Bourlac immediately resolved to go straight to Barbet. The former publisher lived in the rue Sainte-Catherine d'Enfer, and it took him a quarter of an hour to reach the house.

"Ah! I suppose you have come to get that bill of sale," said Barbet, replying to the salutation of his victim. "Here it is."

And, to Baron Bourlac's great astonishment, he held out the document, which the baron took, saying, —

"I do not understand."

"Did n't you pay me?" said the usurer.

"Are you paid?"

"Yes, your grandson took the money to the sheriff this morning."

"Then it is true you made a seizure at my house yesterday?"

"Haven't you been home for two days?" asked Barbet. "But an old magistrate ought to know what a notification of arrest means."

Hearing that remark, the baron bowed coldly to Barbet and returned home, thinking that the policemen whom Népomucène had pointed out must have come for the two impecunious authors on the upper floor. He walked slowly, lost in vague apprehensions; for, in spite of the explanation he gave himself, Népomucène's words came back, and seemed to him more and more obscure and inexplicable. Was it possible that Godefroid had betrayed him?

XIX.

VENGEANCE.

THE old man walked mechanically along the rue Notre-Dame des Champs, and entered the house by the little door, which he noticed was open. There he came suddenly on Népomucène.

“Oh, monsieur, come quick! they are taking Monsieur Auguste to prison! They arrested him on the boulevard; it was he they were looking for; they have examined him.”

The old man bounded like a tiger, rushed through the house with the speed of an arrow, and reached the door on the boulevard in time to see his grandson getting into a hackney-coach with three men.

“Auguste,” he said, “what does all this mean?”

The poor boy burst into tears and fainted away.

“Monsieur, I am the Baron Bourlac, formerly attorney-general,” he said to the commissary of police, whose scarf now attracted his eye. “I entreat you to explain all this.”

“Monsieur, if you are Baron Bourlac, two words will be enough. I have just examined this young man, and he admits —”

“What?”

“The robbery of four thousand francs from Doctor Halpersohn!”

“Is that true, Auguste?”

“Grandpapa, I sent him as security your diamond snuff-box. I did it to save you from going to prison.”

“Unhappy boy! what have you done? The diamonds are false!” cried the baron; “I sold the real ones three years ago!”

The commissary of police and his agents looked at each other. That look, full of many things, was intercepted by Baron Bourlac, and seemed to blast him.

“Monsieur,” he said to the commissary, “you need not feel uneasy; I shall go myself to the prefect; but you are witness to the fact that I kept my grandson ignorant of the loss of the diamonds. Do your duty; but I implore you, in the name of humanity, put that lad in a cell by himself; I will go to the prison. To which one are you taking him?”

“Are you really Baron Bourlac?” asked the commissary.

“Oh, monsieur!”

“The fact is that the municipal judge and I doubted if it were possible that you and your grandson could be guilty. We thought, and the doctor, too, that some scoundrels had taken your name.”

He took the baron aside, and added:—

“Did you go to see Doctor Halpersohn this morning?”

“Yes, monsieur.”

“Your grandson went there half an hour after you.”

“Did he? I knew nothing of that. I have just returned home, and have not seen my grandson for two days.”

“The writs he has shown me and the examination explain everything,” said the commissary of police. “I see the cause of the crime. Monsieur, I ought by rights to arrest you as accomplice to your grandson; for your answers confirm the allegations in Doctor Halpersohn’s complaint. But these papers, which I here return to you,” holding out to the old man a bundle of papers, “do prove you to be Baron Bourlac. Nevertheless, you must hold yourself ready to appear before Monsieur Marest, the judge of the Municipal Court who has cognizance of the case. As for your grandson, I will speak to the *procureur du roi*, and we will take all the care of him that is due to the grandson of a former judge, — the victim, no doubt, of youthful error. But the complaint has been made, the delinquent admits his guilt, I have drawn up the *procès-verbal*, and served the warrant of arrest; I cannot go back on that. As for the incarceration, I will put him in the *Conciergerie*.”

“Thank you, monsieur,” said the unhappy Bourlac.

With the words he fell rigid on the snow, and rolled into one of the hollows round the trees of the boulevard.

The commissary of police called for help, and Népomucène ran up, together with Madame Vauthier. The old man was carried to his room, and Madame Vauthier begged the commissary to call on his way in the rue d'Enfer, and send Doctor Berton as soon as possible.

"What is the matter with my grandfather?" asked poor Auguste.

"He is out of his head. You see what it is to steal," said the Vauthier.

Auguste made a movement as though he would dash out his brains. The two agents caught him.

"Come, young man, be calm," said the commissary of police; "you have done wrong, but it may not be irreparable —"

"Monsieur, will you tell that woman my grandfather has n't had anything to eat for twenty-four hours?"

"Oh! the poor things!" exclaimed the commissary under his breath.

He stopped the coach, which had started, and said a word in the ear of one of his agents, who got out and ran to Madame Vauthier, and then returned.

When Dr Berton arrived he declared that Monsieur Bernard (he knew him only under that name) had a

“With these words he fell rigid on the snow, and rolled into one of the hollows round the trees of the boulevard.”



high fever of great intensity. After hearing from Madame Vauthier all the events which had brought on this crisis (related after the manner of such women) he informed Monsieur Alain the next morning, at Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas, of the present state of affairs; on which Monsieur Alain despatched a note in pencil by a street messenger to Monsieur Joseph.

Godefroid had given Monsieur Joseph, on his return from the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse the night before, the notes confided to him by Auguste, and Monsieur Joseph had spent part of the night in reading the first volume of Baron Bourlac's work.

The next morning after breakfast Madame de la Chanterie told her neophyte that he should, if his resolution still held good, be put to work at once. Godefroid, initiated by her into the financial secrets of the society, worked steadily seven or eight hours a day for several months, under the inspection of Frédéric Mon-genod, who came every Sunday to examine the work, and from whom he received much praise and encouragement.

"You are," he said, when the books were all in order and the accounts audited, "a precious acquisition to the saints among whom you live. Two or three hours a day will now suffice to keep the current accounts in order, and you will have plenty of surplus time to help the work in other ways, if you still have the vocation you showed for it six months ago."

It was now July, 1838. During the time that had elapsed since his opening attempt on the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, Godefroid, eager to prove himself worthy of his friends, had refrained from asking any question relating to Baron Bourlac. Not hearing a single word on the subject, and finding no record of any transaction concerning it in the accounts, he regarded the silence maintained about the enemy of Madame de la Chanterie and his family either as a test to which he himself was subjected, or as a proof that the friends of the noble woman had in some way avenged her.

Some two months after he had left Madame Vauthier's lodgings he turned his steps when out for a walk towards the boulevard du Mont-Parnasse, where he came upon the widow herself, and asked for news of the Bernard family.

"Just as if I knew what has become of them!" she replied. "Two days after your departure — for it was you, slyboots, who got the affair away from my proprietor — some men came here and rid me of that arrogant old fool and all his belongings. Bless me! if they did n't move everything out within twenty-four hours; and as close as wax they were too; not a word would they say to me. I think he went off to Algiers with his rogue of a grandson; for Népomucène, who had a fancy for that young thief, being no better himself, could n't

find him at the Conciergerie. I dare say Népomucène knows where he is, though, for he too, has run away. That's what it is to bring up foundlings! that's how they reward you for all your trouble, leaving you in the lurch! I have n't yet been able to get a man in his place, and as the quarter is looking up the house is full, and I am worked to death."

Godefroid would never have known more about Baron Bourlac and his family if it had not been for one of those chance encounters such as often happen in Paris.

In the month of September he was walking down the great avenue of the Champs Élysées, thinking, as he passed the end of the rue Marbeuf, of Dr. Halpersohn.

"I might," thought he, "go and see him and ask if he ever cured Bourlac's daughter. What a voice, what immense talents she had! — and she wanted to consecrate herself to God!"

When he reached the Rond-point Godefroid crossed it quickly, on account of the many carriages that were passing rapidly. As he reached the other side in haste he knocked against a young man with a lady on his arm.

"Take care!" said the young man; "are you blind?"

"Hey! is it you?" cried Godefroid, recognizing Auguste de Mergi.

Auguste was so well-dressed, and looked so dandified

and handsome and so proud of giving his arm to a pretty woman, that if it had not been for the youth's voice and the memories that were just then in his own mind he might not have recognized him.

"Oh! it is our dear Monsieur Godefroid!" said the lady.

Hearing those words in the celestial notes of Vanda's enchanting voice, Godefroid stopped short on the spot where he stood.

"Cured!" he exclaimed.

"For the last ten days he has allowed me to walk out," she replied.

"Who? Halpersohn?"

"Yes," she said. "Why have you not been to see us? Perhaps it was well you didn't;" she added; "my hair came off; this that you see is a wig; but the doctor assures me it will grow again. Oh! how many things we have to tell each other! Come and dine with us. Oh! your accordion! oh! monsieur," — she put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"I shall keep it all my life," she went on, "and my son will preserve it as a relic after me. My father has searched all Paris for you. And he is also in search of his unknown benefactors; he will grieve himself to death if you do not help him to discover them. Poor father! he is gnawed by a melancholy I cannot always get the better of."

As much attracted by that exquisite voice, now rescued from the silence of the grave, as by a burning curiosity, Godefroid offered his arm to the hand held out to him by the Baronne de Mergi, who signed to her son to precede them, charging him with a commission which he seemed to understand.

“ I shall not take you far,” she said ; “ we live in the Allée d’Antin, in a pretty little house built in the English fashion. We occupy it alone ; each of us has a floor. Oh ! we are so comfortable. My father thinks that you had a great deal to do with our good fortune.”

“ I ? ”

“ Yes ; did you know that on a recommendation made by the minister of public instruction a chair of international law has been created for papa at the Sorbonne ? He begins his first course next November. The great work on which he has been engaged so long will be published this month by the firm of Cavalier and Co., who agree to share the profits with my father ; they have already paid him on account thirty thousand francs. My father bought our house with that money. The minister of justice has awarded me a pension of twelve hundred francs as the daughter of a former judge ; my father has his retiring pension of three thousand, and his professorship will give him five thousand more. We are so economical that we are

almost rich. My dear Auguste will begin his law studies in two months; but he is already employed in the office of the attorney-general, and is earning twelve hundred francs a year. Ah! Monsieur Godefroid, promise me you will never speak of that unhappy affair of my poor Auguste. As for me, I bless him every day for that action, though his grandfather has not yet forgiven him. Yes, his mother blesses him, Halpersohn adores him, but my father is implacable!"

"What affair?" asked Godefroid.

"Ah! I recognize your generosity," cried Vanda. "What a heart you have! Your mother must be proud of you."

She stopped as if a pain had struck her heart.

"I swear to you that I know nothing of the affair of which you speak," said Godefroid.

"Is it possible that you really did not know it?" said Vanda. And she related naïvely, in terms of admiration for her son, the story of the loan that he had secured from the doctor.

"If we may not speak of it before Baron Bourlac," said Godefroid, "tell me now how your son got out of his trouble."

"Well," said Vanda, "I told you, I think, that he is now employed by the attorney-general, who shows him the greatest kindness. Auguste was only forty-eight hours in the Conciergerie, where he was put into the

governor's house. The good doctor, who did not receive a noble letter the boy wrote him till late at night, withdrew his complaint; and, through the influence of a former judge of the Royal Courts, whom my father has never been able to meet, the attorney-general was induced to annul the proceedings in the court. There is no trace left of the affair except in my heart and my son's conscience, and alas! in his grandfather's mind. From that day he has treated Auguste as almost a stranger. Only yesterday Halpersohn begged him to forgive the boy; but my father, who never before refused me anything — me, whom he loves so well! — replied: 'You are the person robbed; you can, and you ought to forgive; but I am responsible for the thief. When I was attorney-general I never pardoned.' 'You'll kill your daughter,' said Halpersohn. My father made no reply and turned away."

"But who helped you in all this? "

"A gentleman, whom we think is employed to do the queen's benefits."

"What is he like? "

"Well, he is of medium height; rather stout, but active; with a kindly, genial face. It was he who found my father ill of fever in the house where you knew us and had him brought to that in which we now live. And just fancy, as soon as my father recovered

I was installed there, too, in my very own room, just as if I had never left it. Halpersohn, whom the gentleman captivated, I am sure I don't know how, then told me all the sufferings my father had endured. Ah, when I think of it! my father and my son often without bread to eat, and when with me pretending to be rich! even the diamonds in the snuff-box sold! Oh, Monsieur Godefroid! those two beings are martyrs. And so, what can I say to my father? between him and my son I can take no part; I can only make return to them in kind by suffering with them, as they once suffered with me."

"And you say you think that gentleman came from the queen?"

"Oh! I am sure you know him, I see it in your face," cried Vanda, now at the door of the house.

She seized Godefroid by the hand with the vigor of a nervous woman and dragged him into a salon, the door of which stood open.

"Papa!" she cried, "here is Monsieur Godefroid! and I am certain he knows our benefactors."

Baron Bourlac, whom Godefroid now saw dressed in a manner suitable for a man of his rank and position, rose and came forward, holding out his hand to Godefroid, saying as he did so:—

"I was sure of it."

Godefroid made a gesture denying that he shared in

this noble vengeance, but the former attorney-general gave him no chance to speak.

“Ah! monsieur,” he said, continuing, “Providence could not be more powerful, love more ingenious, motherhood more clear-sighted than your friends have been for us. I bless the chance that has brought you here to-day; for Monsieur Joseph has disappeared forever; he has evaded all the traps I set to discover his true name and residence. Here, read his last letter. But perhaps you already know it.”

Godefroid read as follows: —

MONSIEUR LE BARON BOURLAC, — The sums which we have spent for you, under the orders of a charitable lady, amount to fifteen thousand francs. Take note of this, so that you may return that sum either yourself, or through your descendants, whenever the prosperity of your family will admit of it, — for that money is the money of the poor. When you or your family are able to make this restitution, pay the sum you owe into the hands of Messrs. Mongenod and Company, bankers.

May God forgive you.

Five crosses formed the mysterious signature of this letter, which Godefroid returned to the baron.

“The five crosses are there,” he said as if to himself.

“Ah! monsieur,” said the old man; “you do know all; you were sent to me by that mysterious lady — tell me her name!”

“Her name!” exclaimed Godefroid; “her name! Unhappy man! you must not ask it; never seek to find it out. Ah! madame,” he cried, taking Madame de Mergi’s trembling hand; “tell your father, if he values his peace of mind, to remain in his ignorance and make no effort to discover the truth.”

“No, tell it!” said Vanda.

“Well, then, she who saved your daughter,” said Godefroid, looking at the old man, “who returns her to you young and beautiful and fresh and happy, who rescued her from her coffin, she who saved your grandson from disgrace, and has given you an old age of peace and honor —” He stopped short — “is a woman whom you sent innocent to a prison for twenty years; to whom, as a magistrate, you did the foulest wrong; whose sanctity you insulted; whose beautiful daughter you tore from her arms and condemned to the cruellest of all deaths, for she died on the guillotine.”

Godefroid, seeing that Vanda had fallen back half fainting on her chair, rushed into the corridor and from there into the street, running at full speed.

“If you want your pardon,” said Baron Bourlac to his grandson, “follow that man and find out where he lives.”

Auguste was off like an arrow.

The next morning at eight o’clock, Baron Bourlac knocked at the old yellow door in the rue Chanoinesse,

and asked for Madame de la Chanterie. The portress showed him the portico. Happily it was the breakfast hour. Godefroid saw the baron, through one of the casements on the staircase, crossing the court-yard; he had just time to get down into the salon where the friends were all assembled and to cry out: —

“Baron Bourlac is here!”

Madame de la Chanterie, hearing the name, rose; supported by the Abbé de Vèze she went to her room.

“You shall not come in, tool of Satan!” cried Manon, recognizing their former prosecutor and preventing his entrance through the door of the salon. “Have you come to kill Madame?”

“Manon, let the gentleman come in,” said Monsieur Alain.

Manon sat down on a chair as if both her legs had given way at once.

“Monsieur,” said the baron in an agitated voice, recognizing Monsieur Joseph and Godefroid, and bowing to Monsieur Nicolas, “mercy gives rights to those it benefits.”

“You owe us nothing, monsieur;” said the good old Alain; “you owe everything to God.”

“You are saints, and you have the calmness of saints;” said the former magistrate; “you will therefore listen to me. I know that the vast benefits I have received during the last eighteen months come from the

hand of a person whom I grievously injured in doing my duty. It was fifteen years before I was convinced of her innocence ; and that case is the only one, gentlemen, for which I feel any remorse as to the exercise of my functions. Listen to me ! I have but a short time to live, but I shall lose even that poor remnant of a life, still so important to my children whom Madame de la Chanterie has saved, unless she will also grant me her pardon. Yes, I will stay there on my knees on the pavement of Notre-Dame until she says to me that word. I, who cannot weep, whom the tortures of my child have dried like stubble, I shall find tears within me to move her — ”

The door of Madame de la Chanterie's room opened ; the Abbé de Vèze glided in like a shadow and said to Monsieur Joseph : —

“ That voice is torturing Madame.”

“ Ah ! she is there ! ” exclaimed the baron.

He fell on his knees and burst into tears, crying out in a heart-rending voice : “ In the name of Jesus dying on the cross, forgive, forgive me, for my daughter has suffered a thousand deaths ! ”

The old man fell forward on the floor so prone that the agitated spectators thought him dead. At that instant Madame de la Chanterie appeared like a spectre at the door of her room, against the frame of which she supported herself.

“In the name of Louis XVI. and Marie-Antoinette whom I see on their scaffold, in the name of Madame Élisabeth, in the name of my daughter and of yours, and for Jesus’ sake, I forgive you.”

Hearing those words the old man raised his head. “It is the vengeance of the angels!” he said.

Monsieur Joseph and Monsieur Nicolas raised him and led him into the courtyard; Godefroid went to fetch a carriage, and when they put the old man into it Monsieur Nicolas said to him gravely:—

“Do not return here, monsieur; the power of God is infinite, but human nature has its limits.”

On that day Godefroid was admitted to the order of the Brotherhood of Consolation.

Z. M A R C A S.

Z. M A R C A S.



TO MONSEIGNEUR GUILLAUME DE WÜRTEMBERG AS A MARK
OF THE RESPECTFUL GRATITUDE OF
THE AUTHOR.

I HAVE never seen any one, including even the most remarkable men of our time, whose appearance was more striking than that of this man; a study of his countenance inspired in the first place a feeling of melancholy, and ended by creating a sensation that was almost sorrowful. A certain harmony existed between the person and the name. The Z that preceded Marcas, which was seen on the address of his letters, and which he never omitted from his signature, that last letter of the alphabet presented something fateful, I can hardly tell what, to the mind.

MARCAS! Repeat to yourself that name of two syllables: do you not feel some sinister significance about it? Are you not made to think that the man who bears it will be martyred? However strange or anomalous that name may be, it has the right to go down to posterity; it is well composed; it is easy to pro-

nounce ; and it has the brevity which ought to belong to all celebrated names. Is it not as soft as it is fantastic ? But also, does it not seem to you incomplete, unfinished ? I am unwilling to take upon myself to assert that names exercise no influence on our destiny. Between the facts of life and the names of men there are secret and inexplicable unisons or visible discords which surprise us ; often distant but effectual correlations reveal themselves. Our globe is compact ; all things hold together. Perhaps we shall one day return to a knowledge of the occult sciences.

Do you not see in the very construction of the *Z* a thwarted air ? Is there not in that uncertain and fantastic zigzag the sign of a troubled life ? What wind has blown upon that letter which, in all the languages to which it has been admitted, owns scarcely fifty words ? *Marcas* was named *Zéphirin*. *Saint-Zéphirin* is highly revered in Brittany. *Marcas* was a Breton.

Let us examine this name still further : *Z. Marcas* ! The whole life of the man is in that fantastic assemblage of seven letters. Seven !— the most significant of cabalistic numbers. The man himself died at the age of thirty-five ; consequently, his life had seven lustres. *Marcas* ! doesn't the thought come to you of something precious which is broken by a fall, with or without noise ?

I was finishing my legal studies in Paris, in 1836. I lived at the time in a lodging-house in the rue Corneille; one of those houses where the staircase goes up at the back, lighted below from the street, half-way up by loopholes, and above by a skylight. There were forty rooms in the building, furnished as students' rooms are always furnished. What does youth want more than what it found there: a bed, a few chairs, a bureau, a glass, and a table? When the heavens are blue the student opens his window. But in this particular street there is no fair neighbor to court. On the opposite side, the Odéon, long closed, presents its blackening wall, the little windows of its boxes, and its vast slate roofs to the eye. I was not rich enough to have a good room; in fact, I could not even have a room to myself. Juste and I shared a room with two beds on the fifth floor.

On that side of the staircase there was only our room and one other, occupied by our neighbor Z. Marcas. Juste and I lived six months in our room in complete ignorance of his existence. An old woman who managed the house did, indeed, tell us that the little room was occupied; but she added that we should never be troubled, for the occupant was extremely quiet. True enough; for in six months we never met our neighbor, or heard the slightest noise in his room, though the wall which separated us was

thin, being one of those partitions made of lath and plaster which are so common in Parisian houses.

Our room, seven feet high, was hung with a miserable paper, blue, with bunches of flowers. The brick floor was innocent of the polish given by rubbing. Beside our beds were two shabby bits of carpets made of list. The chimney top was too near the roof, and smoked so badly that we were forced to put on a chimney pot at our own expense. Our beds were mere couches of painted wood, like those of boarding-schools. On the fireplace were two brass candlesticks, with or without candles as the case might be, our two pipes, a pile of loose tobacco, or a bag of it, and little heaps of ashes deposited by our visitors or by ourselves when we smoked cigars. Two calico window-curtains hung from their pole, on either side of which were bookshelves in cherry, of a kind well-known to all loungers in the Latin quarter, on the shelves of which lay the few books that were needful for our studies. The ink stood in the inkstand like congealed lava round the crater of a volcano, — emblematic, perhaps, for in these days every inkstand may become a Vesuvius. The shabby goose-quills served to clear out the bowls of our pipes. Contrary to all monetary laws, paper was a rarer thing with us than even coin.

How can anybody hope to keep young men quiet in such lodgings as these? Consequently, the students

pursued their studies chiefly in cafés, theatres, in the alleys of the Luxembourg, in the rooms of the grisettes, anywhere, even in the Law-school, except their miserable chambers, — miserable as long as it was a question of studying, charming for the purpose of chattering and smoking! Lay a cloth on that table; see the improvised dinner, sent in by the best caterer of the quarter, four knives and forks and two grisettes; have the scene lithographed, and the veriest *dévôte* could scarcely help smiling.

We thought of nothing but how to amuse ourselves; but the cause of our dissipation was to be found in the more serious aspects of modern politics. Juste and I saw no room for us in the professions which our parents had forced us to select. There are scores of lawyers and scores of doctors waiting for every vacant place. Crowds obstruct these vocations, which seem to lead to fortune, and are two arenas where we fight, where we kill, not with sword and sabre, nor with guns and pistols, but by intrigue and calumny, by dreadful toil, by campaigns in the domain of intellect as murderous as those of Italy for the Republican soldiers. In these days when life is but a struggle of the intellect, we must know how to sit forty-eight consecutive hours in our chair before a table, as a general sits two days in the saddle on a battlefield.

A flux of embryo physicians has forced the profession

to divide into categories: there's the writing doctor, the practising doctor, the politic doctor, the militant doctor; four different methods of being a physician, four sections already crammed. As to the fifth division, doctors who sell the remedies, medical practitioners so-called, there is much competition among them; they fight with horrid advertisements on the walls of Paris.

As for lawyers, there are almost as many barristers as there are cases. Consequently, the barrister takes refuge in journalism, in politics, in literature. The State, pestered by applications for the trifling posts of the magistracy, has of late required a certain amount of property in the applicants. The pear-shaped head of some son of a rich grocer is preferred to the square brow of a young man of talent without a sou. By exerting himself to the utmost, by employing all his energy, a young man who starts from nothing may find himself at the end of ten years below his point of departure. In these days talent succeeds only by the same luck that makes incapacity successful; more than that, if talent does not conform to the low conditions which give success to rampant mediocrity it will never succeed.

Knowing our epoch thoroughly, Juste and I also knew ourselves; we preferred the sloth of thinkers to useless activity, indifference and pleasure to fruitless

toils which would wear out our courage and exhaust the very springs of our intellect; we analyzed the social state as we went our way laughing and smoking. In so doing, our reflections and our talk were none the less serious and profound.

Observing the slavery to which youth is condemned, we were amazed at the brutal indifference of power to all that concerns intellect, thought, and poesy. What looks we exchanged, Juste and I, as we read the newspapers, skimmed the debates in the Chamber, followed political events, or discussed the conduct of a court whose voluntary ignorance was only equalled by the dulness of its courtiers, the mediocrity of the men who formed a hedge around the new throne, — men without mind or aim, without fame or knowledge, without influence or grandeur. What reflected praise on the court of Charles X. is the present court, if indeed it can be called a court at all! What unfaithfulness to the nation in the naturalization of vulgar foreigners, devoid of talent, foisted into the Chamber of peers! What denial of justice, what insult offered to distinguished young men, to honest ambitions born on the soil! We looked at all things as we would at a show, shuddering at the sight, but taking no part in it ourselves.

Juste, whom no one ever sought, and who never of himself would have sought any one, was now. at

the age of twenty-five, a profound thinker, and a man of marvellous aptitude in seizing remote relations between present and future facts. He told me in 1831 what would happen; and things he predicted have happened, — namely, assassinations, conspiracies, the reign of Jews, the dearth of intellect in high places, the glut of talents kept below the surface where the noblest courage and ambition were extinguished. What, for instance, could he become? His family wished him to be a physician. Being a physician means waiting twenty years for practice. Do you know what actually became of him? No. Well, he is a physician; but he left France, and went to Asia. He is now perhaps succumbing to fatigue in the desert, or dying of wounds inflicted by barbarous hordes; or, possibly, he may be the prime minister of some Eastern prince.

My vocation is action. Having left college at twenty years of age, I was disqualified for entering the army in any other capacity than that of a private soldier. Disheartened by the melancholy prospect held out by the law, I have fitted myself for a naval career. I am about to imitate Juste and desert France, where, in order to gain the smallest foothold, one must spend the time and energy which elsewhere might achieve some high results. Follow my example, friends; I am going where a man may guide his destiny at will.

These great resolutions were coldly taken in the little chamber of our lodging in the rue Corneille; taken as we went to the Musard balls, made love to pretty girls, and led a life of folly and apparent carelessness. The resolutions and our reflections floated long on the current of our minds. Our neighbor Marcas was, in a certain way, the guide who led us finally to the brink of the precipice, or the torrent, and caused us to measure it; showing us, in advance, the fate that awaited us if we allowed ourselves to drop into it. It was he who put us on our guard against the compromise, contracted by poverty and sanctioned by hope, of accepting precarious positions in which a man struggles with Paris, the great courtesan, who takes him and leaves him, smiles or turns her back upon him with equal readiness, wearing out the noblest wills by captious delays, while the ill-fated being is waiting upon chance.

Our first meeting with Marcas had a sort of fascinating effect upon us. Returning from our two schools before the dinner hour, we always went up to our room, where one of us waited for the other to know if our plans for the evening were changed. One day, at four o'clock, Juste saw Marcas on the staircase, and I met him, a moment later, in the street. This was in November, but Marcas had no cloak. He was wearing thick-soled shoes, trousers of woollen twill, a blue frock-coat,

buttoned to the chin, with a square collar, which gave a military air to his breast, all the more, perhaps, because he had a black cravat. There was nothing singular about his dress, and yet it harmonized with the air, and manner, and countenance of the man himself.

My first impression on seeing him was neither surprise, nor amazement, nor sadness, nor interest, nor pity, but curiosity, — curiosity, which partook of all those sentiments. He walked slowly, with a step which depicted the deepest melancholy, his head bent forward, but not lowered after the manner of those who know themselves guilty. His head, strong and large, looking as though it contained the treasures needful for an ambition of the first order, seemed loaded with thought. Evidently the man was succumbing under the weight of mental misery, but not the faintest trace of remorse was visible on his features. As for his face, it can be described in a single word. There's a popular opinion that every face bears a resemblance to some animal. Marcas's animal was the lion. His hair was like a mane; his nose was short and flattened, broad, and cleft at the tip like that of a lion. His forehead was divided (lion-like again) by a strong furrow which parted it into two vigorous lobes; and, finally, his hairy cheek-bones, which the gauntness of the cheeks made the more prominent, his

enormous mouth and his hollow jaws had something grand in their motions and structure, and were colored with tones of a tawny yellow.

This almost terrible face seemed illuminated by two lights, two black eyes, that were, nevertheless, infinitely gentle, calm, profound, and full of thought. If it is allowable to thus express it, those eyes were humbled by the man's own will. Marcas feared to look at others, — less for his own sake than for those on whom his fascinating glance might fall. He possessed a power, and desired not to exercise it; he protected those who passed him, dreading to be remarked. This was not humility, but resignation; not Christian resignation, implying love and mercy, but a resignation produced by reason, which demonstrates the helplessness of talent, the impossibility of penetrating the centre where we rightfully belong, and of living in it. His glance at certain moments cast lightning. From his mouth, resembling that of Mirabeau, came a voice like thunder.

“I have just met a very remarkable man in the street,” I said to Juste on entering our room.

“It must be our neighbor,” replied Juste, who then described accurately the man I had just met. “A man who lives like a beetle ought to look like that.”

“What lowliness, and what grandeur!”

“The one is the cause of the other.”

“How many ruined hopes! how many abortive plans!”

“Seven leagues of ruins! — obelisks, palaces, towers; the ruins of Palmyra in the desert,” said Juste, laughing.

Thereupon we called our neighbor the Ruins of Palmyra. When we went to dinner at the miserable restaurant in the rue de la Harpe to which we subscribed, we asked our porter the name of number 37, and heard for the first time the talismanic name of *Z. Marcas*. Like boys that we were, we repeated more than a hundred times, with varied inflections, grotesque or melancholy, that name which lent itself by its accentuations to our childish play. Sometimes Juste would fling out the *Z* like a rocket, and having thus displayed the first syllable of the name with splendor, he depicted a fall, by the dull brevity with which he uttered the remainder.

“*Ah ça!* how does he live? What does he do?”

From these questions to an innocent sort of spying, the result of curiosity, there was only a short interval. Instead of lounging on the boulevard, we went to our lodging, each furnished with a novel, to be read while we watched and listened. We heard in the absolute silence of our garret, the soft and equable noise produced by the breathing of a sleeping man.

“He is asleep,” I said to Juste, being the first to remark the fact.

“What! at seven o’clock?” replied the doctor.

That was the name that I gave Juste, and he called me the Keeper of the Seals.

“A man must be very unhappy to sleep as much as that,” I said, seizing a large knife which lay upon the drawers, in the handle of which was a corkscrew. With the latter I made a round hole at the top of the partition, about as large as a five-sous piece. I did not reflect that there might be no light in the next room; and when I applied my eye to the hole nothing was to be seen but darkness. About one in the morning, having finished our novels, we were preparing to undress when we heard a noise in our neighbor’s room. He rose, struck a phosphoric match, and lighted his candle. I mounted the bureau. There, looking through the hole, I saw Marcas sitting at his table and copying legal papers. His room was half the size of ours. The bed occupied a recess beside the door, for the space taken by the corridor which ended at the door of his den allowed of this; but the ground on which the house was built must have been lopped off at this extremity, for the side partitions were of unequal length, and the front wall crooked. There was no chimney in the room, — only a small stove of white porcelain with green spots, the pipe of which went through the roof

The window in the crooked wall had miserable faded curtains. One armchair, a table, a bed, and a night-table composed the furniture. He kept his clothes in a cupboard. The paper on the wall was hideous. Evidently, no one had ever lodged there but a servant until Marcas came.

“What do you see?” asked the doctor, as I clambered down.

“Look yourself,” I replied.

The next morning, at nine o'clock, Marcas was in bed. He had breakfasted on a Bologna sausage; we saw, on a plate among a few bread-crumbs, the remains of that aliment, which was well known to us. Marcas slept. He woke up about eleven. Then he returned to his copying, the sheets of which lay upon the table. As we went downstairs we asked the porter the price of that room, and were told the rent was fifteen francs a month.

Within a few days we knew accurately the sort of existence led by Z. Marcas. He copied deeds and conveyances, no doubt at so much a sheet, for a contractor in legal writings who lived in the court of the Saint-Chapelle; he worked during half the night; after sleeping from six to ten hours he began his writing again when he rose, and wrote till three; then he carried his copies to the contractor before dinner, which he took at Mizeraï's, in the rue Michel-le-Comte, for

nine sous a meal; after which he came home, and went to bed at six. It was clear to us that Marcas never uttered more than fifteen sentences a month. He spoke to no one; and he said not a word to himself in his horrible garret.

“The Ruins of Palmyra are fearfully silent!” cried Juste.

This silence in a man whose external appearance was so imposing, had something extremely significant about it. Sometimes when we met him looks were exchanged between us, pregnant with thoughts on both sides; but no advances followed. Insensibly this man became the object of an inward admiration, without our being able to explain to ourselves the cause of it. Was it this secretly simple way of life, this monastic regularity, this hermit-like frugality, this toil at fool’s work, which allowed his thoughts to be exercised or not exercised, as though he were awaiting some fortunate event, or following some predetermined course in life?

But after having lived sometime among the Ruins of Palmyra, we forgot them; we were so young! Then came the carnival, — that Parisian carnival, which will henceforth obliterate the Carnival of Venice, and draw all Europe to Paris, if the blundering prefects of police do not oppose it. The carnival nonsense should be tolerated; the moral idiots who are suppressing its

gayety are foolish reckoners, who will re-establish that necessary evil when they discover that France is leaving its millions in Germany.

The joyous carnival led us, like other students, to the depths of poverty. We parted with all our articles of luxury; we sold our duplicate coats and boots and waistcoats, in fact all we had that was double except our friendship. We lived on bread and scraps from the cook-shops; we walked about cautiously; we set to work; for we owed two months' rent, and felt certain that the porter's bill would extend down sixty to eighty lines, and amount to some forty or fifty francs. No longer were we bold or joyous as we crossed the square hall at the foot of the staircase and passed the lodge; sometimes we cleared that space at a bound by springing from the last stair to the street. The day on which tobacco was lacking to our pipes, we perceived that for several days we had eaten dry bread without any species of accompaniment. The sadness was extreme.

"No more tobacco!" said the doctor.

"No dinner!" said the Keeper of the Seals.

"Ha! you rascals, you *would* dress as *postillons de Longjumeau*! You *would* go about as *débardeurs*, sup in the morning, and breakfast at night at Véry's — and sometimes at the Rocher de Cancale! Dry bread for you, gentlemen! You ought," said I, growling it

out, "to lie under your beds; you are unworthy to lie upon them —"

"Yes, but, Keeper! no more tobacco!" cried Juste.

"It is time to write to our aunts and sisters and mothers, and tell them our shirts are worn out, and that tramping in Paris would use up wire socks if we had them. We'll now solve the mighty chemical problem of changing linen to silver."

"But we've got to live till the answer comes."

"Well, I'll contract a loan from those of our friends who are not yet through with their capital."

"How much do you expect to get?"

"Ten francs," I answered with pride.

Marcas had heard us. It was twelve o'clock. He rapped on our door, and said: —

"Messieurs, here is some tobacco; you can return it to me on the first occasion."

We were amazed, not at the offer, which was instantly accepted, but at the richness, the depth, the plenitude of that voice, which could only be compared to the fourth string of Paganini's violin. Marcas disappeared without waiting to be thanked. We looked at each other, Juste and I, in the deepest silence. To be helped by some one evidently poorer than ourselves! Juste began at once to write to all his families, and I went off to negotiate the loan. I got twenty francs

from a man of my own town. In those miserable happy days play still existed, and to its mines, hard as Brazilian rocks, youth hastened, risking little, for the chance of winning a trifle of gold. My townsman had some Turkish tobacco, brought from Constantinople by a sailor. He gave me fully as much as we had received from Z. *Marcas*.

I returned with my rich cargo, and together, Juste and I, we made triumphal restitution to our neighbor of a voluptuous, blond net-full of Turkish tobacco in place of his humbler *caporal*.

"You are not willing to owe me anything," he said. "You return me gold for copper! You are children — good children."

These three sentences, said on different tones, were each differently accentuated. The words were nothing, but the accents — ah! the accents made us friends of long standing. *Marcas* had hidden away his copies when he heard us coming; we therefore felt it would be indelicate to speak to him of his means of living, and we felt ashamed of having spied upon him. His cupboard was open, and all it contained was two shirts, one white cravat, and a razor. The razor made me shudder. A mirror, which might be worth five francs, hung beside the window. The few and simple gestures of the man had a sort of savage grandeur. We looked at each other, the doctor and I, as if to dis-

cover what we ought to answer. Juste, seeing that I was speechless, said in a half-jesting way: —

“Does monsieur cultivate literature?”

“I take good care not to do so,” replied Marcas.

“I should not be as well off as I am.”

“I thought,” said I, “that poesy alone, in these days, could lodge a man as badly as we three are lodged.”

The remark made Marcas smile, and the smile gave grace to his yellow face.

“Ambition is not less severe to those who don’t succeed,” he answered. “Therefore, you who are just beginning life, keep to the beaten track! Don’t dream of being superior men, or you ’ll be lost.”

“Do you advise us to remain as we are?” said the doctor, laughing.

Youth when it jests has so communicative and infantine a grace, that Juste’s remark made Marcas smile again.

“What events ever gave you so dismal a philosophy?” I said to him.

“Once more I have forgotten that chance is the result of a vast equation, of which we do not know all the roots. When a man starts from naught to reach the Whole, the chances are incalculable. Paris is a huge roulette table for ambitious minds; young men think they can play a victorious double-or-quits upon it.”

He offered us the tobacco we had given him, and asked us to smoke with him; the doctor went to get our pipes. Marcas filled his own and then followed me to our room, carrying the tobacco; because in his there was only one chair beside his own. Active as a squirrel, Juste ran downstairs, and soon reappeared followed by a waiter bearing three bottles of Bordeaux, some Brie cheese, and bread.

“Well done!” I said to myself, not mistaken by a single sou, “fifteen francs gone!”

As the thought crossed my mind, Juste laid the remaining five francs on the chimney-piece.

Immeasurable differences exist between the social man and the man who lives close to nature. After Toussaint l'Ouverture was captured, he died without uttering a word. Napoleon, once upon his rock, chattered like a magpie; he wanted to explain himself. Z. Marcas committed, solely on our behalf, the same fault. Silence and its full majesty are found nowhere but in savages. There was never a criminal who, being able to let his secrets drop into the basket with his head, did not feel the purely social need of telling them to some one. No, I am mistaken. We have seen one of the Iroquois of the faubourg Saint-Marceau, putting Parisian nature at the height, in this respect, of savage nature. A man, a republican, a conspirator, a Frenchman, an old man, has surpassed all that we

know of barbarian firmness, all that Cooper revealed of disdain and calmness under defeat in the Redskins. Morey, that Guatemozin of the Montagne, preserved an attitude unknown otherwise to European justice.

The following is the history told to us by Marcas in the course of that morning, mingling his narrative with slices of bread and cheese, and washing it down with Bordeaux. The tobacco was all used up. The noise of the hackney-coaches, rumbling through the place de l'Odéon, and the lumbering omnibuses, served to remind us that Paris was still there.

His family belonged to Vitré; his father and mother lived in that town on fifteen hundred francs a year. He was educated gratuitously in a seminary, but had finally refused to become a priest; he felt within him the fire of a great ambition, and he came to Paris alone, on foot, at the age of twenty, with two hundred francs in his pocket.

He went through the Law-school, working at the same time in a lawyer's office, where he presently became head-clerk. He was now a doctor of laws, knowing thoroughly the old and the new codes of legislation; he could show the law to even celebrated barristers. He knew that of civil life and individuals, and also that of all the European treaties, and of international customs and observances. He had studied men and things in five great capitals, namely: London, Berlin,

Vienna, Petersburg, and Constantinople. No one understood the parliamentary precedents of the Chamber better than he. For five years he reported the debates for a daily paper. He spoke with ease, and was able to speak long and admirably, in that deep and gracious voice which had already moved our souls. He proved to us by this narrative of his life that he was a great orator, — concise, earnest, and yet of an incisive and penetrating eloquence. He resembled Berryer in his warmth and in his sympathetic impulse toward the masses; he resembled Monsieur Thiers in shrewdness and practical ability; but he was less diffuse than Thiers, less unable to decide; he expected to pass abruptly into power, without binding himself to the doctrines which at first seem necessary to a man of the Opposition, — doctrines which prove later very embarrassing to the statesman.

Marcas had acquired all that a true statesman ought to know; his amazement was therefore extreme when he had occasion to verify the dense ignorance of public affairs in the men who had managed under the present dispensation to reach office. Though his sense of vocation had made him study, Nature had been prodigal of her gifts; she had given him much that cannot be acquired: keen penetration, an empire over himself, dexterity of mind, rapidity of judgment, decision, and, what is the true genius of such men, fertility of means.

When he thought himself sufficiently armed for his career, Marcas found France torn by intestinal divisions born of the triumph of the Orléans branch over the Elder branch. Evidently, the system of political struggles has changed. Civil war cannot last always, and it will never again be waged in the provinces. In France we shall never have anything but short struggles at the seat of government, which will merely terminate the moral war which chosen minds will have previously carried on. This state of things must last as long as France preserves her singular government, which has no analogy with that of any other nation; for there is not less disparity between the English government and our own than there is between the two territories.

Marcas' starting-point was, naturally, in the political press. Poor, and therefore not eligible for election, it was necessary that he should in some way manifest himself strikingly. He resolved to make the most costly sacrifice possible for a superior man; namely, to subordinate himself to some rich, ambitious, but incapable deputy whose work he would undertake to do. This later Colbert hoped to find his Mazarin. He rendered to the man he found immense services; he rendered them — and on this point he made no pretences, he did not magnify himself, he made no outcry about ingratitude — he rendered them with the hope that his protector would put him in a position to

be elected deputy. Marcas desired no other thing than the loan of a sum sufficient to buy a house in Paris, and thus conform to the election laws. Richard the Third asked only for a horse.

In three years Marcas created one of the fifty fictitious political capacities which are the battledoors with which more artful hands toss ministries to each other, precisely as the manager of a puppet-show knocks Punch and the policeman together in his open-air theatre, hoping to put money in his hat. The man thus created existed only through Marcas; but he had enough mind of his own to appreciate the value of his maker; he knew that Marcas, once in power, would remain there as a needed man, while he himself would be transported to the polar regions of the Luxembourg. He therefore resolved to put invincible obstacles in the way of his creator's advancement, but to hide that intention beneath an outward show of absolute devotion. Like other small men he could dissimulate admirably, all the while pushing forward in the career of ingratitude; for he felt that he must kill Marcas in order to prevent Marcas from killing him.

The two men so united apparently, hated each other as soon as the one had deceived the other. It happened in this wise: The deputy became a member of the ministry. Marcas remained in the Opposition for the purpose of warding off attacks upon his

minister, for whom, by a masterly stroke, he contrived to obtain the praises of the Opposition. To avoid rewarding his lieutenant for his immense services, the minister now alleged the impossibility of doing anything, without the most cautious management, for a member of the Opposition. *Marcas* had counted upon the gift of an office to make a marriage which should give him the eligibility he so much desired. He was then thirty-two years old. He foresaw the dissolution of the Chamber. After detecting the minister *flagrante delicto* in thus deceiving him, he overthrew him, or at any rate he contributed largely to his fall, and rolled him in the mire.

Every fallen minister, if he seeks to return to power, should prove himself formidable. This man, whose head was turned by the royal loquacity which made him believe himself a minister secure of his place for a long time, now recognized his blunder; he did *Marcas* (who had fallen into debt in the course of the struggle) a small pecuniary service. He assisted the paper for which *Marcas* worked, and obtained for him its management. *Marcas*, though he despised the man, thus received as it were a species of retaining fee; and he consented to seem to make common cause with the fallen minister.

Without as yet unmasking his full superiority, *Marcas* put himself openly before the world for the

first time, and showed a part at least of his statesman-like ability. The new ministry lasted only one hundred and eighty days, and then it was swallowed up. Marcas, meantime, brought into relations with several deputies, had kneaded them like dough, giving to all a high idea of his talents. His puppet returned to power with the incoming ministry, and Marcas' paper became ministerial. The minister then united this paper with another, for the sole purpose of getting rid of Marcas, who was forced by this fusion to yield his place to a rich and overbearing competitor, whose name was known, and whose foot was already in the stirrup.

Marcas fell back into utter poverty. His arrogant puppet knew well the gulf into which he had plunged his creator. Where could Marcas turn? The ministerial journals, privately instructed, would have nothing to do with him. The journals of the Opposition were reluctant to admit him to their offices. Marcas, with his opinions, could not pass into the ranks of either the republicans or the legitimists, two parties whose triumph means the overthrow of the existing state of things.

"Ambitious men prefer the thing that is," he said to us smiling.

He lived at that time by writing a few articles on commercial enterprises. He worked on one of those

encyclopædias which speculation, and not learning, produce. At last, a journal was started of which Marcas was made the editor; but it lived only two years. During that time he renewed acquaintance with the enemies of the minister, he joined the party which sought the overthrow of the administration, and, as soon as his pickaxe came into play, the ministry was demolished.

At the time we met, Marcas' journal had been dead about six months; he had found no other place; he was made to appear a dangerous man; calumny pursued him: it declared that he had lately killed an immense financial enterprise by newspaper articles and a pamphlet; he was known to be the organ of a banker who, they said, was paying him well, and from whom, no doubt, he expected certain compliances in return for his devotion, etc., etc.

Disgusted with men and things, wearied with a five years' struggle, Marcas, who was looked upon more as a free lance than as a great leader, overcome by the necessity of earning his bread, oppressed by the sordid influence of money upon thought, fell a prey to the utmost misery, and retired to his garret, earning thirty sous a day, the exact sum necessary for his wants. Meditation spread its desert, as it were, around him. He read the newspapers to keep in touch with the current of events. This was how

Pozzo di Borgo lived for a time. No doubt Marcas was meditating some plan of serious attack. We never knew the nature of it, nor the exact cause of his comings and goings. He may have been practising dissimulation, and punishing himself for his mistakes by this Pythagorean silence. At any rate, he gave us no reasons for his conduct.

It is impossible to relate the scenes of high comedy which were hidden beneath the algebraic synthesis of his life, — the useless waiting on the heels of fortune which ever fled him; the long hunts through Parisian briers; the hurrying hither and thither of the breathless seeker; attempts thwarted by fools; lofty projects frustrated by the influence of some ignorant woman; conferences with shop-keepers who wanted their promised subscriptions to bring them in operaboxes, titles, and enormous interest; hopes arriving at the summit only to be dashed to pieces by a fall; marvels performed in combining conflicting interests which worked together for a week, and then flew asunder; the mortification, repeated a thousand times, of seeing a fool decorated with the Legion of honor, ignorance preferred to talent. Besides all this, there came what Marcas called the strategics of stupidity. "You argue," he would say, "with a man; he seems convinced, he nods his head, all is about to be arranged; on the morrow that bit of india-rubber, bent

the evening before in one direction, has returned during the night to its natural shape; it may even have stiffened, and all must be done over again; you still work upon that mass until you discover that you have to do, not with a man, but with a mastic which softens in the sun."

These discomfitures, these enormous losses of human force on sterile objects; the difficulty of effecting any good; the incredible facility of doing evil; two great parties foiled, twice won, twice lost; the hatred of a blockhead statesman with a painted mask and false hair, but in whom the public believed, — all these great and little things had not discouraged, but momentarily subdued, *Z. Marcas*. In the days when he had had money, his fingers did not retain it; he gave himself the celestial pleasure of sending it all to his family, — his sisters, his brothers, his old father. He himself, like the fallen Napoleon, needed no more than his thirty sous a day, and any man of industry can earn that in Paris.

When *Marcas* had thus ended his tale, which was mingled with reflections, maxims, and observations, all denoting a great political mind, it only needed a few questions and a few answers to prove to us that *Marcas* was indeed a true statesman; for men can be quickly and easily judged when they consent to come upon the ground of difficulties. For superior men there is a

Shibboleth, and we were of the tribe of modern Levites without, as yet, having entered the Temple. As I told you just now, our frivolous life covered plans which Juste has already executed on his part, and which I on my side am about to carry out.

After our talk was over we all three went out together, and in spite of the cold we walked about the garden of the Luxembourg. During this walk, the conversation, always serious, turned upon the painful aspects of the present political situation. Each of us said our say, our epigram, our jest, our maxim. The topic was not exclusively the life of colossal proportions just depicted to us by Marcas, that soldier of political strife. Neither was it the honorable monologue of the navigator, stranded in the garret of a lodging-house in the rue Corneille; it was mainly a dialogue in which two intelligent and well-informed young men, who had judged their epoch, sought, under the guidance of a man of talent, to look clearly at their own future.

“Why,” asked Juste of Marcas, “have you not waited patiently for an opportunity? Why not have imitated the only man who has made himself really noticeable since the revolution of July by always keeping outside of the current.”

“Have I not told you that no man knows the workings of chance? Armand Carrel was in precisely the

same position as the orator you mention. That gloomy young man, that bitter spirit, bore a whole government in his brain; the man you speak of had no idea beyond that of mounting the crupper behind each event. Of the two, Carrel was the strong man. Well, your man became minister, Carrel was left a journalist; the insufficient, though subtle man still lives, but Carrel is dead. I also call attention to the fact that your man took fifteen years to make his way, and has done nothing more *than* make his way; he may still be caught and ground to powder between two cartloads of intrigue on the high-road of power. He has no rank; he has not, like Metternich, the stronghold of favor, nor like Villèle, the protecting roof of a compact majority. I don't believe the present state of things will exist ten years hence. Therefore, supposing me to have attained his measure of luck, I should really be no better off; for, in order not to be swept away by the movement I foresee, I must have previously acquired a high position."

"What movement?" asked Juste, eagerly.

"August, 1830," replied *Marcas*, in solemn tones, stretching out his hand toward Paris, "*August*, produced by youth which bound the sheaves, by intellect which ripened the harvest, has forgotten the part thus played by youth and intellect. But that youth will presently explode like the boiler of a steam-engine. Youth

has no opening in France; an avalanche of neglected capacities, of legitimate and restless ambitions is accumulating; young men marry but little; families know not what to do with their children. What sound will shake these masses? That I know not; but they will fall, precipitately, on the present state of things and overwhelm it. There are laws of fluctuation which rule the generations; the Roman empire had forgotten them when the barbarians came down. To-day the barbarian has intellect. The laws of surplus are at work at this moment, slowly, silently, in the midst of us. The government is guilty of this; it has ignored the two powers to which it owes all; it has allowed its hands to be tied by the folly of its present contract; it has prepared itself to be made a victim. Louis XIV., Napoleon, and England were, and are, eager to obtain and encourage intelligent youth. In France, youth is rejected by the new laws, by the fatal conditions of the elective system, by the vices of the ministerial constitution. If you examine the composition of the elective Chamber, you will not find a deputy as young as thirty. The youth of Richelieu and of Mazarin, of Turenne and Colbert, the youth of Pitt, and that of Saint-Just, of Napoleon, and that of Metternich could have found no place there. Burke, Sheridan, and Fox would have been turned away. If our rulers had put political majority at twenty-one, and

stripped eligibility of all species of condition, the departments could not have elected worse men than their present deputies, — men without any political talent whatever, incapable of saying a word without murdering grammar; among whom, ten years hence, not a statesman will be found. Such men may perceive the cause of a coming circumstance, but they are unable to foresee the circumstance itself. At the present moment the youth of the country is being driven into republicanism, because youth fancies it sees its own emancipation in a republic. It remembers the youthful representatives of the people and the young generals! The imprudence of the government is equalled only by its avarice.”

This day has had its echo throughout our existence. Marcas approved of our determination to leave France, where young talent full of abounding activity is crushed beneath the weight of successful, envious, and insatiable mediocrity.

We dined together in the rue de la Harpe. Henceforth there was, on our part toward him, a most respectful affection; on his part toward us, the most active protection in the sphere of ideas. The man knew all things; he had fathomed all. On our behalf, he studied our chances in other lands. He showed us the points toward which our studies ought to tend; he bade us make haste, proving to us the value of time,

making us see that emigration would soon set in, with the result of taking from France the cream of its energy and its vigorous intellect, that such young minds would choose the most favorable places, and that our wisdom was to be the first to go.

After this we worked steadily and often late at night. This generous master wrote several memoranda for us, two for Juste, and three for me, — admirable instructions which experience alone could have given; landmarks which none but genius could have planted. There are in those pages, smelling of tobacco, written in a cography that is well-nigh hieroglyphic, priceless indications for success, predictions of unerring sagacity. Forecasts on certain features of Asia and America are in them which have been realized since Juste's departure and before my own.

Marcas, like ourselves, had reached the lowest pitch of poverty; he earned his daily bread, but he had no change of either linen, clothes, or foot-gear. He never made himself seem better than he was; he admitted that he dreamed of luxury as the result of attaining power. Thus, he did not recognize in himself the true Marcas. His outward man he abandoned to the caprices of actual life. He lived by the breath of his ambition; he dreamed of vengeance, and reproved himself for indulging in so hollow a sentiment. The true statesman, he said, should, above all things, be

indifferent to common passions; he ought, like the man of science, to care only for the things he studies.

It was during these days of abject poverty, that Marcas seemed to us so grand and so terrible. There was something terrifying in his glance which contemplated one more world than that which struck the eyes of ordinary men. To us he was an object of study and amazement, for youth (which of us has not felt it?) — youth feels a keen need of bestowing admiration; it loves to attach its soul; it is naturally inclined to subordinate itself to men it thinks superior, just as it instinctively devotes itself to great aims. Our amazement was particularly excited by his indifference in the matter of sentiment. No woman had ever entered his life. When we talked to him on that subject of eternal conversation in France, he said simply: —

“Gowns cost too much!”

Then he caught the glance which Juste and I exchanged, and added: —

“Yes, too much. The woman who is bought — and that primary cost is the least — requires such vast sums of money! Woman extinguishes all activity, all ambition; Napoleon reduced her to what she ought to be. In that respect he was great; he never gave way to the ruinous fancies of Louis XIV. and Louis XV.; though he did love secretly at times.”

We saw that, like Pitt, who took England for his

wife, Marcas bore France within his heart. He was an idolater of his country; there was not a single thought of his mind which was not for his native land. His rage at holding in his hand, as he believed, a remedy for the woes which saddened him, and yet not be able to apply it, gnawed his soul incessantly; and his rage was still further increased by the inferior position of France, in comparison with Russia and England. France in the third rank! That cry was incessantly returning in his talk. The intestine evils of the country seemed to have passed into his own intestines. He compared the struggles of the court against the Chamber, which kept up a constant agitation very harmful to the prosperity of the country, to the nagging of a lodging-house porter.

“This sort of peace is discounting the future,” he would say.

One evening Juste and I were very busy and wrapped in the deepest silence. Marcas had waked and set to work on his copying; for he refused our help in that direction in spite of our earnest entreaties. We had offered to each copy one-third of his task, so that he would have only the last third of his insipid work to do; but he showed anger, and we dared not insist.

We now heard the tapping of elegant boots in our corridor, and we raised our heads to look at each other. Some one knocked at Marcas' door, the key of which

was always left in the lock. We heard our great man say : —

“Come in ;” and then, “*You* here, monsieur?”

“I, myself,” replied the former minister, his puppet.

Here, then, was the Diocletian of this unknown martyr. Our neighbor and he talked long together in low tones. Suddenly Marcas, whose voice was seldom raised, as often happens in a conference where the appealing person begins by stating facts, suddenly burst forth on some proposition which we did not hear.

“You would jeer at me,” he said, “if I believed you. The Jesuits are abolished, but Jesuitism is eternal. There is no sincerity in either your Machiavelianism or your generosity. *You* know whom to rely on, but no one knows how to rely on you. Your court is composed of owls which fear the light, old men who either tremble before youth or disregard it. Government merely follows the cue of the court. You have sought the remains of the Empire, just as the Restoration enrolled the time-servers of Louis XIV. Up to this time the country has taken the compromises of your timidity and cowardice for able political manœuvres ; but dangers are overtaking you ; the youth of France will rise as it did in 1790. It did great things in those days. At the present time you change ministers as a sick man turns over in bed — to get a little ease. Such oscillations betray the decrepitude of your

government. You have practised a system of political swindling which will turn against you, for France will not stand such shuffling much longer. France will not tell you she is weary of it; men in power never know why they perish; history tells that; but I will tell you that you perish for not having asked the youth of France for its forces, its energies, its devotion, its ardor; you perish for having hated and dreaded capable men; for not having culled them with heartfelt desire from this noble generation; for having preferred in all things *mediocrity*. You come now to ask for my assistance. But you belong to that decrepit mass which self-interest makes hideous, which trembles, which shrinks and shrivels, and because it is so mean and petty, wants to belittle France. My strong nature, my ideas, would be the same as poison to you. You have tricked me twice; twice I have overthrown you, and you know it. To unite with you for the third time could only be for some most serious reason. I would kill myself if I allowed you to dupe me again, because I should then despair of myself; the guilty one would not be you, but I."

We then heard the humblest words, the warmest adjuration from his former puppet that he would not deprive the country of his great talents. The man in power talked of patriotism; to which Marcas replied with a significant "Humph! humph!" He jeered

openly at his would-be patron; the latter became still more explicit. He admitted the superiority of his former counsellor; promised to put him in the way of being elected deputy and of entering the administration; and finally proposed to him an eminent position, saying that henceforth he, the minister, would subordinate himself to one of whom he was only fitted to be the lieutenant. He was about to enter the new coalition ministry, but he was unwilling, he said, to return to power unless Marcas should also receive a place worthy of his talents; he had, in fact, made that a condition, and Marcas was accepted as a necessity.

Marcas refused point-blank.

"I have never," said the minister, "been in a position to fulfil my promises to you; here is the opportunity to be faithful to my word, and you refuse me!"

Marcas made no reply to this last speech. The boots were heard departing along the corridor, the sound continuing down the staircase.

"Marcas! Marcas!" we both cried, rushing into his room, "why do you refuse? He was sincere. His conditions were honorable. Besides, you will be brought into contact with the other ministers."

In the twinkling of an eye we had poured out a hundred reasons; the tone of the future minister rang true; without seeing him we had judged that there was no deception in his offer.

“ But I have no clothes,” objected Marcas.

“ Rely upon us,” said Juste, looking at me.

Marcas had the courage to trust us. Light flashed from his eyes; he passed his hand through his hair, disclosing his forehead by one of those gestures which reveal a belief in happiness; and when he thus, as it were, unveiled his face, we saw a man who was utterly unknown to us: Marcas sublime; Marcas in power; the mind in its element; the bird restored to the air; the fish returned to the water; the horse galloping across the steppe. It was momentary; the brow darkened; a vision of his destiny o’er-shadowed it. Halting Doubt followed close upon that white-winged Hope. We left the man alone with his thoughts.

“ *Ah ça!*” I said to the doctor, “ we have promised, but how shall we perform? ”

“ Let us think of it asleep,” replied Juste. “ Tomorrow morning we will communicate ideas.”

The next morning we went to take a turn in the Luxembourg.

We had had time to reflect on the event of the night before, and we were both surprised, one as much as the other, at the want of faculty shown by Marcas in the little miseries of life, — he, whom nothing embarrassed in the solution of the most difficult problems of national or material policy. But all high natures are sensitive to the roughness of grains of sand, and are liable to

fail in noble enterprises for want of a thousand francs. That's the history of Napoleon, who, lacking boots, did not start for India.

"What have you thought of?" asked Juste.

"Well, I know how to get credit for a complete outfit."

"With whom?"

"With Humann."

"How can you manage it?"

"Humann, my dear fellow, never goes among his customers; his customers go to him; therefore he does not know whether I am rich or not. He knows only that I have a good figure, and that I wear the clothes he has made for me becomingly. I am going to tell him that a relation of mine has descended upon me from the provinces whose indifference in the matter of clothes puts me to shame in good society, where I am looking for a wife. He won't be Humann if he sends his bill under three months."

The doctor thought the idea excellent in a vaudeville, but preposterous in view of the realities of life; he doubted its success. But I do assure you that Humann did equip Marcas, and, artist that he is, he dressed him as a man in the public service ought to be dressed.

Juste's contribution was two hundred francs in gold, the proceeds of two watches bought on credit, and pawned at the Mont-de-Piété. I say nothing about

six shirts (all that was absolutely necessary in the way of linen), which cost me only the pleasure of asking for them of the charming forewoman of a great linen shop with whom I had musarded during the carnival.

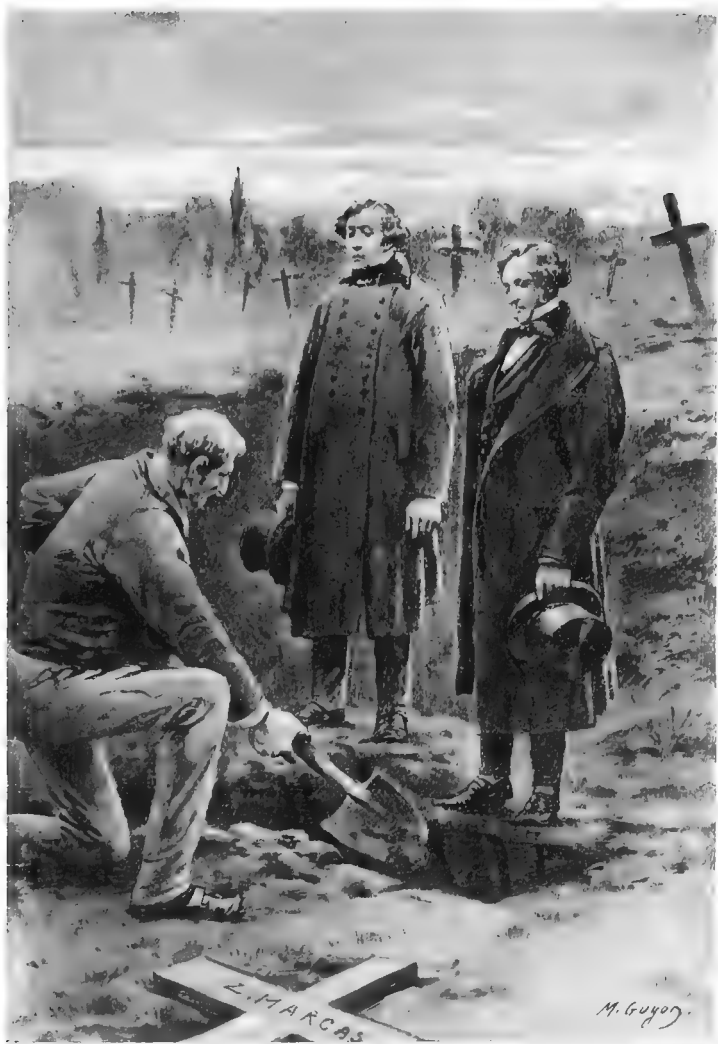
Marcas accepted all without thanking us more than he should have done. He merely inquired as to the means by which we had come into possession of such riches, and we made him laugh for the last time with our account of it. We gazed at our Marcas as merchants who have exhausted their credit and all their resources in equipping a ship must gaze at the vessel as she weighs her anchor and sets sail.

Here Charles stopped speaking; he seemed oppressed by his recollections.

“ Well,” cried those about him, “ what happened ? ”

“ I ’ll tell you in two words, for this is not a novel, it is history. We saw no more of Marcas. The ministry lasted six months; it perished after one session. Marcas came back to us without a penny, worn out with overwork. He had sounded the crater of power; he returned with the beginnings of a nervous fever. The disease made rapid progress, and we took care of it. Juste, at the very start, brought the physician-in-charge of the hospital where he now lived, as an *interne*. I, who continued to live in our own room alone, was the most attentive of sick-nurses; but all our care, and even science itself, was unavailing.

The burial of Marcus.



M. Guyon

“ In the month of January, 1838, Marcas felt, himself, that he had only a few days more to live. The minister, to whom for six months he had served as soul, did not come to see him, and never even sent to inquire for him. Marcas expressed to us the deepest contempt for the government. He seemed to doubt the future of France, and that, no doubt, was the cause of his illness. He believed he saw treachery to the nation at the very heart of power, — not palpable, discernible treachery, resulting from acts, but treachery produced by a system, by the subjection of national interests to personal ends. This belief in the future abasement of his country was enough to make his illness incurable.

“ I was witness to propositions made to him by one of the leaders of the Opposition which he had fought so strenuously. His hatred for those he had tried to serve was now so violent that he would, undoubtedly, have consented to enter the coalition which was beginning to be formed among a party of ambitious men who were possessed by a sole idea, that of casting off the yoke of the court. But Marcas replied to the negotiator in the well-known words of the Hôtel de Ville: —

“ ‘ It is too late! ’

“ Marcas did not leave enough to bury him; and we had the greatest difficulty, Juste and I, to save him

from a pauper's funeral. We followed, all alone, the coffin of Z. Marcas, which was thrown into the common grave of the cemetery of Mont-Parnasse."

Those of us who heard the close of this narrative, the last which Charles Rabourdin told us the evening before his embarkation at Havre on a brig bound to the Malaccas, looked at each other sadly, for, alas! we knew more than one Marcas, more than one victim of political devotion rewarded by betrayal or forgetfulness.

THE END.

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